

BARBARA GOES TO OXFORD

BARBARA BURKE



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BARBARA GOES TO OXFORD



OXFORD, FROM MAGDALEN TOWER

BARBARA GOES TO OXFORD

BY
BARBARA BURKE

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND EDITION

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Know you her secret none can utter?
Hers of the Book, the tripled crown?
Still on the spire the pigeons flutter;
Still by the gateway flits the gown;
Still on the street, from corbel and gutter,
Faces of stone look down.

Q., 'Alma Mater,'
from *The Oxford Magazine*

PREAMBLE

‘ Now this much without vanity may be asserted of the subject, that if all persons, both Ladies and Gentlemen, would spend some of their tyme in Journeys to visit their native land, and be curious to Inform themselves and make observations of the pleasant prospects, good buildings, different products and manufactures of each place, with the variety of sports and recreations they are adapt to, would be a souverain remedy to cure or preserve ffrom those Epidemick diseases of vapours, should I add Laziness?—it would also form such an idea of England, add much to its Glory and Esteem in our own minds, and cure the evil itch of overvalueing fforeign parts ; at least ffurnish them with an equivalent to entertain strangers when amongst us, or inform them when abroad of their native Country, which has been often a Reproach to the English, ignorance and being strangers to themselves.’

CELIA FIENNES

Through England on a Side Saddle, 1695

BARBARA BURKE TO HER AUNT
MRS. CAMILLA OUTHWAITE

BALLINACRAGGA, *July* 1900

DEAR AUNT CAMILLA,—I am off on a little jaunt. I hope that it will not strike you as being too unconventional in character. I want to go somewhere where I know nobody and no one knows that I am a rich person; it is so dull always to behave as becomes a young lady of fortune; I want to taste the joys of a humble but sufficient lodging, and the pleasures of frugal but elegant house-keeping. To do this under ideal conditions, and in a manner which should not cause you needless anxiety, has long been

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the object of my secret ambition. Now the time and the place and the suitable companion have all arrived together ; Brownie is free to come with me, and we are going to spend some weeks at Oxford in the middle of the Long Vacation. Isn't it a truly joyful plan ? Brownie has been with the Smiths since she ceased to be dear father's secretary ; she is leaving them now, and she does not take up her new secretaryship until the autumn. Providence could not have provided me with a more suitable companion ; wholly delightful as she is to me, and entirely satisfactory as she cannot fail to be to you ; old enough to be a guide and a philosopher, young enough to be a comrade and a friend.

We shall take very little money. Brownie because she has so little, I because I have so much. We shall be very saving, and shall make what we

have go as far as possible. We shall be quite sure to meet no one that we know, and we shall have Oxford to ourselves, to examine at our leisure. This will be so much better than forming our first impressions of it from a gay visit in term. Don't you remember that Mary told us what a scramble she had when Tom was at Magdalen and she went up for 'Commem'? She said that she saw nothing properly, she was always so hurried and tired : life seemed to be composed wholly of balls and of young men ; she never felt the spirit of the place at all.

Now we are to have, of course, an entirely manless holiday. We are to enter into the spirit of the place, and the spirit will, we hope, enter into us and make us glad. I shall tell no one where I am going, and I shall have no letters forwarded to me. Jenkins and Mrs. O'Hara can manage the house perfectly

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well. Do you remember what Aunt Mary's gardener used to say, 'Them as asks no questions don't hear no lies'? I will tell Jenkins to say this to any casual inquirers after my whereabouts, though I doubt if his sense of propriety will allow him to do so.

You, of course, shall hear the true tale of all our adventures. I will not waste my one talent for picturesque letter-writing by sending my letters broadcast over the Continent after you. I will write a very long and very full diary-letter—every day I will write it, and you shall read it when we are together again. I will also send you postcards to say that we live and flourish. Could any niece do more to show her appreciation of a most excellent aunt? Good-bye, dearest; do not be anxious about us. Remember that Brownie and I shall have no other use for our intellects than to exercise

them in taking care of ourselves. It is not very flattering to those intellects to suppose them to be unequal to the task.

Ever your loving niece,

BARBARA BURKE.

FIRST WEEK

They told me of the August calm
Of Oxford in the Long Vacation,
How rarely plied th' infrequent tram
'Twixt Cowley and the Railway Station ;
How Undergraduates are gone,
Or peaks to climb or moors to shoot on ;
And now remains but here a Don
And there a speculative Teuton.

A. G., *Verses to Order*

AT MRS. CODLICOTT'S
HOPE COTTAGE, OXFORD

Monday, July 1900

WE are extremely happy.
We met at Chester on Saturday ;
Sunday we spent in delicious planning ;
to-day we started early and arrived here
about three o'clock.

You must remember when you read
this that we are persons of limited means,
and our lodgings are proportionately
humble. They were well recommended
to Brownie as being clean and comfort-
able ; to my mind they are perfectly
ideal.

They are 'licensed lodgings' ; that means

that they are let to undergraduates in term time and are duly inspected by the Controller of Licensed Lodging-houses.

Our rooms are occupied in term by Enderby of Balliol. Now this is very nice for us, as Enderby's books and pictures line the walls, and we feel that we shall become quite familiar with Enderby's thoughts and ways. We have a small sitting-room which opens on to the garden. Such a charming garden! Very small but very perfect; well walled in from the road. Hope Cottage is not called after the virtue: it is dominated by the tall buildings of the Hope Library.

Our landlady's name is Mrs. Codlicott; she is a bland and dignified person. Her small maid is called Zilpah. She has a poodle dog called Lotze and a Persian puss called Hobbes. These names she tells us are bestowed on them by 'some of the gentlemen,'—this seems to be the

technical term for an undergraduate. We have brought very few books, as we have come to the land where they grow. Do you remember the title of the immortal work that Brownie and I are some day to compose—'Byways Beyond Baedeker, By Brown and Burke'? Perhaps we shall write the opening chapters of it here!

We step out of our room upon a very tiny lawn; it is divided by a hedge of roses from another equally tiny. Had we any fellow lodgers they would be monarchs of their little patch and we should reign alone upon ours.

The little Zilpah brought us our tea upon our lawn. She is a very young maid, lately imported from Cornwall. 'Yes, m'm, if you do please, m'm' is her one answer to all our remarks. We thought that it would be a charming plan to spend our first evening at Oxford in walking round

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the city, following as far as possible the line of the ancient walls.

After tea we set forth. We looked out our way before we went, for who does not despise the obvious tourist who consults his map in the street? We slipped our little guide-book into our pocket in case of real need.

We started along a street made fragrant by the scent of many lime-trees; the wall of St. John's College on our right, on our left the garden of the Warden of Wadham.

We turned down Holywell Street, which is narrow and winding and full of ancient houses. Some of these had just been pulled down, and, through the gaps, one caught glimpses of the old city wall which is still standing here. Then into Long-wall Street, delightfully and descriptively named, and so into the High Street. The sun was setting behind St. Mary's

Church and the beautiful curving street was a path of glory. I was reluctant to turn away from it, but Brownie was inexorable. 'We have come out to walk round the walls of this New Jerusalem,' she said, 'not to go mooning in at the Golden Gate.'

So we turned down Rose Lane and went on into Christ Church meadows, under the bastions of the old walls and out by the Water Gate into St. Aldate's (which is pronounced St. Old's). Then along Brewer Street, narrow and dark, and so into Paradise Square.

Here we saw boards 'To Let' on a house. It looked very interesting and we were in search of adventures, so we tapped on the door and prevailed on the caretaker to let us in. Such a beautiful old house! It stands on the edge of the old city wall: there is a little court with a fountain in it and, down below, a tangled garden

with mulberry-trees. Many of the rooms are panelled, and one has a beautifully moulded ceiling.

I am afraid, dear, that you would not like the neighbourhood—there is a public house on either hand and the smell of fried fish floated on the air—or I myself would take it. I would cheer it up and give it a good conceit of itself. I expect that an old house which has fallen upon evil days feels its position keenly. Think of the joy of searching the shops for furniture that would recall to it the days of its prime.

When we started off again we could not follow our walls very well, modern improvements have so changed things.

We went up Castle Street and along New Inn Hall Street, and so out into the Cornmarket just where the North Gate used to stand. The Norman tower of St. Michael's rose cold and grey against a sky



BROAD STREET

of chrysoprase green. The last gleam of the sunset just touched the top of it with tender rose.

Slowly we went along Broad Street, past the Sheldonian theatre, and so home.

We have walked all round our new domain, our fairy city. We feel as though we have drawn a cordon of love and reverence about it, and so have made it ours for evermore. We sat for a long time at our window. The tiny garden looked large and mysterious in the deep shadow: above its walls we could see the massed elms of St. John's Gardens. The only sounds we heard were the hooting of the owls and the gentle rustling of one tall poplar in the breeze.

Here we hushed and blessed ourselves with silence for a space and then went off to bed.

Tuesday

Bed was the last word that slipped off

my pen yesterday. That was at eleven o'clock or thereabouts, a most appropriate time. Now it is twelve o'clock on a beautiful July day, and I am in bed. Thus it fell out.

We set off early this morning for the lower river, that is the part below the town, where we hoped to hire a punt. Long afternoons on the water were to bring us that peace with an Oxford flavour which is what we have come here to seek. A punt seemed to answer all our requirements — for me exercise, for Brownie perfect rest, combined with such absolute safety as should satisfy an anxious aunt. Mrs. Codlicott told us that we could arrange to keep it at Parsons' Pleasure, the bathing-place on the River Cherwell; there it would be within five minutes' walk. Evidently Providence is arranging this jaunt for us. Could any tourist agency have managed

it so well? We went to Parsons' Pleasure and shouted aloud for 'Mr. Cox!' as Mrs. Codlicott had instructed us to do. We could hear the joyous shrieks of the bathers behind a row of wooden sheds. We made our little plan, and then we went on down by the college barges. Here we engaged our punt, a charming light one with ample cushions. The *Pons Asinorum* was ours to have and to hold as long as we chose to keep her. I suppose one does speak of a punt as 'she' in spite of its very unfeminine appearance?

I punted along in my very best manner. On we went past the barges, turned into the Cherwell and skirted Christ Church meadows, lying golden in the sunlight. Then up such a lovely reach; Magdalen walks on our left, on our right a lush green meadow, beyond that some low green hills.

The stream was very narrow and winding as we came out by the path which is called Mesopotamia; we were in the midst of an argument, the mud was thick and deep, the punt pole long and slender. I remember a moment of horrible uncertainty as to whether the pole belonged to me or I belonged to the pole,—and then, I went—plop—into the water. An opportune waterman rowing down the stream picked me out of the mud and set me on board again. He turned about and came up to Parsons' Pleasure with us and helped to drag the punt over the rollers, by means of which one gets from the Lower to the Upper Cherwell. Here we tied up our craft and stowed away our cushions, and I dripped slowly homewards feeling very wet and silly.

‘Well, there now! did ever any one hear of such a thing?’ cried our good

Mrs. Codlicott as she ran to put the kettle on the fire and sent the little Zilpah to seek for hot-water bottles. 'Well, now! isn't that perfectly annoying?'

Brownie insisted on bed and hot-water bottles, and I yielded, for it would be too silly to be laid up at this stage of the holiday with that cold of which she preaches.

So here I lie in bed and my pen is flowing fast. Were I ever to commence author I should take at once to my bed; it is the only place where my ideas run at all freely. But then I never shall so commence. I would rather stay quietly in the ranks of non-novel-writing females. There will soon be so few of us that we shall have to form a society. Ultimately we might become a cloistered order—a quiet refuge for the unlettered daughters of England. No one should be admitted if a line of her composition had ever

appeared in print. I would be the first abbess of the order, and the rule should be of the strictest. Sometimes, perhaps, I would yield to entreaty and would admit one who had fallen from grace ; but only if the maid were very young and if it were her first offence. The excellent Brownie has gone forth to the circulating library to get me some novels.

‘ They must be about Oxford,’ I said ; ‘ sensible if possible, exciting if Heaven wills, but Oxford they must have for their background, if not for their theme.’

Brownie has returned with all that she can lay hands on ; they do not amount to much. There is, of course, the immortal *Verdant Green*, but very little of a later period that gives at all a vivid picture of Oxford as it is now. I wish that some one would write about Oxford as Anthony Trollope wrote about Barchester. Not

so much from the undergraduate as from the don's wife's point of view. The people here must lead such an interesting uncommon sort of life, quite different from that of any ordinary town. There ought to be an excellent setting for a readable novel to amuse poor folk in such a plight as this of mine.

Our dear, comfortable landlady came to look after the fire and to condole with me while Brownie was away, and I made her stay and talk.

‘Queer lodgers, miss,’ she said ; ‘yes, to be sure, I have had some queer ones. A Russian I had once ; he was an oddity, went off without paying his rent he did, but still I was glad to be rid of him, so I was, miss, he was such an odd one, locked up all his things in the sitting-room cupboard, so he did. “You see that cupboard, Mrs. Codlicott,” he says, “there’s a loaded pistol in there,” he says, “and if any one

unlocks that there cupboard before I come back," he says, "it'll go off and kill them as sure as I'm alive," he says. Well, he goes away and he stops away, and I never hears no more of him for a year or more, and Mr. Enderby he wants the use of the cupboard; it might be as it was a year ago. Well, miss, I went up to college—a Balliol gentleman he was, if you can call him a gentleman—and I made bold to ask if his tutor—a Mr. M'Dougall he was—would be so good as to see to the opening of the cupboard, as I didn't like to take no such responsibility on myself, you see, miss.'

'I see,' said I, as Mrs. Codlicott paused for breath. 'I quite see; and did Mr. M'Dougall come?'

'Yes, he come, miss, and I told him all the circumstances the same as I'm a-telling you now, and he says he doesn't think that I need mind the responsibility,

“for I takes all that on myself, Mrs. Codlicott,” he says.’

‘But did he open the cupboard?’ I asked.

‘No, he did not, miss; there were several people waiting in college to see him most perticular, he said, and he had to go and see them.’

‘And is the pistol still there?’

‘No, miss, there wasn’t never no pistol at all. Mr. Enderby he opened the lock with his knife, and his books is there now.’

Here Mrs. Codlicott took breath and started off once more.

‘Mr. Enderby, now, he’s a nice lodger—always so friendly and ready with his joke. “Don’t you let Cary-Selby put upon you, Mrs. Codlicott,” he says. “If you finds of him uppish, you just say to him, ‘You may think a good deal of yourself, sir,’ do you say, ‘but we all of

us knows that you only took a third in Theology.'”'

‘And did you ever say so to him?’ said I.

‘Well, no, miss, I never did ; but it was a comfort to think that I had it ready to say if I wanted to. He really was a trial at times, was Mr. Cary-Selby ; he was that conceited there was no a-bearing with him.’

‘Do your lodgers always bring their own pictures and things?’ I asked.

‘Near always, miss,’ said she ; ‘and it goes to my heart sometimes to move out my own for their rubbish, for rubbish it often is, miss, and that’s all you can call it. The beautiful pictures I’ve got stowed away upstairs that did used to be in Mr. Enderby’s room before he come—the Russian he hadn’t none of his own—“Coming of Age in the Olden Time,” I had, and me and my husband near as

large as life and tinted, and some nice coloured pictures in lovely frames—cheerful-looking things—and some of those they brings, well, I can't call them nothing better than hideous, and some I calls most outrageous ; and the litter they makes. But there ! I likes them and takes an interest in them, and its gratifying when they takes a good class and is a credit to the house, and always comes to see me when they come back again. "The happiest time of my life was when I stayed in your house, Mrs. Codlicott," they 'll say more often than not.'

Wednesday

There will not be much to chronicle to-day, for it rains in torrents. There is really nothing to be done but to give ourselves up to what Brownie calls 'the pleasures of our immediate environment.'

This means that we are seated in front

of a glorious fire, for it is not only wet, but very, very cold, and Oxford is—one owns it with bated breath—a somewhat damp Paradise. We went out early this morning to see the cathedral, but we were fain to take refuge in a bookshop from a downpour.

Such a fascinating place! The very bookiest of bookshops, lined with shelves full of books, full of tables covered with books, passages and stairs lined with and leading to more books. The very floor was heaped up with books. We browsed at leisure. No one came to disturb us or to ask us to buy. It seemed to be quite a meeting-place, and, to judge by some scraps of conversation that we heard, there are more university people about than we had supposed. We sympathised with a forlorn woman in a most strange quandary: she had come to buy a book, but as she seemed unable to remember either the

title or the name of the author, hers was but a bootless errand. She appeared to be most pathetically surprised that the very intelligent shopman was powerless to help her.

‘You really don’t think that you know the book I mean?’ she said.

‘Indeed, madam,’ said he, ‘I’m afraid I do not.’

‘My sister-in-law said that it was such an interesting book,’ said she. ‘I thought that you would have been sure to have known all about it.’

Disappointed and disconsolate she wandered off into the rain.

Wasn’t it nice of her to come shopping just when we wanted a little diversion?

There were some very american American tourists buying guide-books. They seemed to think that they had come to a bureau of general information.

‘And now can you tell us what is just

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the most interesting thing to be seen in your city?' they asked the young man who was serving them.

He recommended them to try Christ Church, and they departed thence in a dripping cab.

We listened with awe to the learned conversation of two persons of serious aspect, who looked as though they could and did write whole shopfuls of deep books ; and with amusement to the comments of two youths on various modern novels. 'Beastly drivel,' 'thundering rot,' and 'ridiculous piffle' were some of the terms that we heard them apply to works that sell by the hundred thousand. They too, in their turn, asked advice of the patient shopman, merely stipulating that whatever he recommended 'must be most awfully new, don't you know.'

We thought that we too might seek for information at this most generous

fount. So we asked why the two youths wore caps and gowns, and why they were here at all in the vacation. We were told that the *vivâ voce* examination for the final honour schools are still going on, so that is why we see these touches of local colour.

‘Why do you not go and listen to a *vivâ*?’ said he.

‘Can we really?’ said we.

‘Certainly,’ said he; ‘they are open to the public, and many people go.’

So we also departed in a dripping cab, which took us to the New Schools, an imposing building in ‘The High,’ as we are learning to call the High Street. A gracious official told us that the Greats examiners were sitting in room seven, and the History examiners in another.

‘We should like best to go to a Greats *vivâ*,’ said we, for it sounded extremely

interesting, and we had not a notion of what it meant.

We were ushered into a large room lighted by two tall windows on the left-hand side. The whole appearance of the room was bare and desolate. A row of chairs was set along the wall, and we seated ourselves upon two of them near the door. At the other end of the room was a long table with five chairs on either side of it. The five examiners sat with their backs to the window, and now and again one would rise and go out by a little door at the other end of the room, but there were always two sitting there, clad in black gowns and scarlet hoods, mystic and wonderful.

Facing them on the other side of the table, the cold unsympathetic light full in his eyes, sat the youth who was being vivâed. He was horribly nervous. One could not help feeling that there was a

kind of indecency in looking on at so much suffering. It was rather like going with a cheerful party to witness a bad operation. One thought of the Inquisition and of the calm impersonal interest of the doctors in Rembrandt's School of Anatomy.

The very ink-spots on the floor took on a sinister meaning.

It was all a rigmarole to me, this talk of Plato and Aristotle, of myths and caves, of statesmen and philosophers. Should a philosopher be also a statesman?—I, too, should like to hold an opinion on the subject. We will study philosophy, will we not, dearest? when the wind howls round Ballinacragga on winter nights.

The cynical suavity of one of the examiners made my blood run cold.

‘And now let us drop that subject,’ he said in dulcet tones from time to time as the poor man buried his head in his hands

in the effort to remember the right thing at the right time. When the philosopher had done with him and had said, 'Thank you, that will do, Mr. Smith,' the man moved down into a chair opposite to that of the last examiner in the row and began to be questioned in Ancient History.

One of the questions stuck in my head to the exclusion of all subsequent ones and sang there like a refrain: 'Was Ephesus more important than Miletus in the sixth century, or was Miletus more important than Ephesus?' Thus ran the question singing through my head.

In front of me I saw the inquiring face of the examiner and the despairing back of the youth. First one examiner and then another rose and went out by the little door.

'Do they go to prepare some ordeal yet more terrible?' I whispered to Brownie.

‘I expect that they have gone to smoke a quiet pipe,’ said Brownie, the ever-practical. At last there came relief.

‘Thank you, Mr. Smith,’ said the suave examiner, and Mr. Smith departed.

Another undergraduate, who had been sitting on the edge of his chair for some minutes, took his place at the table, and it all began again. This youth was glib and ready with his answers, his manner was free and debonair; he leaned gracefully back in his chair and answered in a lightly conversational tone of voice.

Some more spectators came in, an intelligent American, Baedeker in hand, and three girls who seemed to be deeply interested in the fate of this young man. Perhaps one was his lady-love come to see her knight tilting at the ring.

We felt that we had seen enough, and we went forth once more into the rain and mud. The official asked us if we would

not like to hear a Modern History *vivâ* too, but we said 'No, thank you,' for we longed for a fire and a fender to put our toes on.

We paddled home through the awful mud. You may think that I am giving you too roseate a view of the joys of life in Oxford, but no mere words can convey to you the horrors of its mud; it seems to be churned up in the roads and to come swimming over the pavements. Now we are excessively happy as we sit with our toes on the fender in our cosy pretty room.

We have time to examine the pictures and books and to form an idea of what their owner must be like; we begin to feel a positive fondness for the unseen Enderby whose shell we are occupying: we speculate, nay, we even argue about his probable appearance.

There are photographs of various college groups in which no doubt he figures, and

each of us is equally certain that she has fixed upon the right man in them. We have agreed not to let the question be prosaically settled for us by Mrs. Codlicott.

My Enderby is a tall man with a Celtic head, big eyes, a square forehead and a crest of upstanding hair. Brownie's Enderby is short and dark, spectacled and keen-looking.

I feel quite sure that my choice is the right one. There is a photograph of a reading party in which both our Enderbys appear. Brownie recognises the face of the don who is in the middle of this group; she says that she used to know him when she was a child and her father was a master at Marlborough. His name is Bent, and she believes that he is now a Fellow of Oriel.

Towards evening there came a break in the clouds and the sun set in a blaze of rosy glory.

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We wandered down the path which is called Mesopotamia, for a reason which is, says Brownie, sufficient to the Biblical student.

It is such a lovely walk. A narrow path fringed on each side with willows: on one hand the main stream of the Cherwell, scene of my discomfiture of yesterday, on the other a backwater which leads to an old mill.

Midway in the walk the water from the upper stream rushes under a little bridge into the lower. We leant over the bridge watching the sun set, the tall tower of Magdalen against the southern sky, and the white mists creeping up across the meadows.

Then came the park-keeper to warn us that the walks close at dusk. So home we went.

Was Ephesus more important than



MESOPOTAMIA

Miletus, or Miletus more important than Ephesus? Thus I murmured to myself as I fell asleep.

Thursday

This morning we set out early to do some domestic shopping. Directed by Mrs. Codlicott we found our way to Little Clarendon Street. We were rather haunted on the way by the commanding ugliness of Keble. We thought that we had left it on our right and were well rid of it, when it appeared again round the next bend with renewed power to annoy.

I suppose that a patriotic Keble man might feel able to become genuinely attached to it and might even grow in time into the habit of finding it beautiful. But his taste would be irreparably injured in the process.

I found a second-hand bookshop, over which I hung enraptured while Brownie was buying foodstuffs. There was a

sixpenny window to it and a threepenny window, and up a little entry there were rows and rows of penny shelves.

A friendly old man regarded me as I dallied with first one threepenny and then another and put them back in their places. 'If you lets them be a time, miss,' he said, 'and comes again in a week or so, they often gets into the penny shelves.' I thanked him kindly and then Brownie joined me, and we turned the corner and soon found ourselves opposite to the pillared front of the Clarendon Press. On the other side of the road are the west buildings of Somerville College. We opened a little gate and walked boldly in through the garden. Brownie knows one of the students, and we pretended to ourselves that we thought she might be there and that we were going to call on her, though of course we felt sure that she must have gone down.

We walked midway along the path, when, to our great amazement, a voice called to us from a hammock under the trees. The voice belonged to Brownie's friend. She has come up for her *vivâ*, which is to take place at twelve o'clock to-day.

She was going down to the Schools at half-past eleven to give moral support to a student from another college who had been summoned to appear at that hour. She said that we might come, too, if we liked to form a feminine background. We jumped at the chance, as you may suppose.

Miss Jones of Somerville called for us later on her bicycle, and we all rode down to the Schools. We followed her into the room of yesterday. How different it looked! The sun streamed in through the tall windows. One or two cheerful detached persons were sitting round the walls.

Miss Smith of Lady Margaret was answering the question of the furthest examiner ; she seemed to be quite calm and collected. Miss Jones whispered to us that she is supposed to be 'a safe second,' and from the questions asked of her and her replies to them she gathered that she was all right.

Two undergraduates came in and sat beside me just as Miss Smith gave place to Miss Jones. They were deeply interested and attentive spectators. Miss Jones answered all that was asked of her so quietly and with such apparent ease, she seemed never to be at a loss for the right answer.

'Great Scott!' murmured my neighbour to his friend, 'isn't she good? Isn't that just the way that old Bent puts it?'

This is the last of the *vivâs*, the class list is to be out to-day at three o'clock, and we are going down to the Schools to see

it posted up. Then Miss Smith and Miss Jones will take tea with us on the river.

We went down again to see the result. We found a little group of interested persons gathered together in front of a list which was hung up in the vestibule of the Schools. The names of the men were printed, those of the women were written underneath.

Miss Jones has a first-class and Miss Smith a second.

We took a very happy party on the river. Miss Smith seems to be very content with her second, and Miss Jones has cause indeed to be proud of her first. She is one of the very few women who have taken a first in 'Mods' and a first in 'Greats.' 'Greats,' you must know, is a nickname for the school of 'Literae Humaniores.'

To think that we only heard of all these

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things and people less than a week ago, and now we talk so familiarly of them all. Our time here is getting much more full of human interest than we expected it to be.

We disembarked for tea under some willows with a rising bank behind us. We made little thrones of cushions for our learned load and plied them with tea and cake, with fruit and with chocolate creams. Then we sat ourselves down at their feet and begged them to recount to us some of the details of their charmed existence.

‘Do not think us rude,’ we pleaded, ‘and tell us if we worry you. We quite expected to have seen Oxford only from the outside tourist point of view, and it is a wonderful chance to find ourselves thus at the very heart of things.’

‘Ah, well,’ they answered, ‘we can’t consider ourselves the centre of the University system, for we are not, as a matter of fact, members of the University at all.’

Then they told us of the battle that raged some years ago over the question of admitting women to the degree. It must have been a most exciting time. The air of Oxford was thick with pamphlets and leaflets, which were addressed by members of the University to themselves and to the public. Some gave weighty reasons for and against the granting of the degree; some were really witty, some merely silly. One, which was not written by an Irishman, accused the women of wishing 'to hang on to the skirts of a male University.'

Peaceful households were divided by this burning question, and the subject had to be tabooed at social gatherings, so deeply did it stir the passions of men and women. In some instances the husband gave his vote and interest to the women's cause, while the wife used tongue and energy against it. Some of the more

morose and jaundiced sort hinted that the original mistake was made when the university admitted women to its examinations at all.

‘We always knew how it would be,’ they cried. ‘Women are an ungrateful, discontented, grasping sex. It is never safe to give them anything.’ And they talked of the thin end of wedges, and of those who take ells when inches have been granted to them. Others were more crafty and drew attractive red herrings across the track.

‘See, my young friends,’ they said, ‘we will aid you to have a University all of your very own; a dreamlike ideal spot, fit for a Princess Ida. Trust in us, we know what is good for you better than you know yourselves. Codlin’s your friend—not Short.’

Now this was very cynical and horrid of them. What they really meant was :

‘Do, do go away. We are ready to do anything—or, at any rate, something—for you, if you will but take yourselves off.’

Some one made the bright suggestion that a temporary women’s University should be set up at Bletchley—a dismal spot midway between Oxford and Cambridge. Then, directly the degree should be granted at either University, the women might decamp thither without any delay.

The great debate came off on the 3rd of March 1896. The motion was lost by an overwhelming majority. It does seem not a little absurd to the observer that a young woman who has taken high honours should not have a degree, while the silliest little passman who can just scrape through the Schools should be able to write B.A. after his name.

You will see that I am gathering a store of prejudices as I go along. But are not prejudices, judiciously chosen and

straitly adhered to, the very salt of one's life?

The undergraduates here seem to have been very little moved by the great struggle. Miss Smith said that a worthy young man once said to her, 'It would make a man look rather a fool, don't you know, if his sister came up here and took a first and he got a plough, don't you see?' Such a thing has, I believe, been known to happen.

To-morrow Miss Smith will take us over Lady Margaret and Miss Jones will show us Somerville. In the afternoon they both 'go down.' You must remember, dear, that one always says, 'I am going up to Oxford.'

Miss Jones is engaged to a man who passed at the head of the Indian Civil last year, so her career is settled for her. She is a radiant being, grey-eyed and chestnut

haired, strong and vigorous too, a champion swimmer and ex-captain of the hockey team.

She told us that one of the Greats examiners is that Mr. Bent who knew Brownie in her childhood. He is a Fellow of Oriel, much loved by his pupils, a leader in all liberal movements, university and political.

‘Talk of an angel and you hear his wings,’ said Brownie, for round the corner came a punt in which lay the examiner very much at his ease and chatting gaily with another man. He looked so cool and so happy in a panama hat with a pipe in his mouth. What connection had this *laissez-faire* being with the stern arbiter of the morning?

Such a pretty lady propelled the pair. A lithe, active figure with a well-poised dark head. Her hat, wreathed with scarlet poppies, struck a full and perfect

note of colour against the soft greys and greens of the water and the willows. There is no prettier sight than that of a slim woman punting and the reflection of the graceful action in a clear stream.

Miss Smith had read Aristotelian logic with Mr. Bent, and she chanted his praises softly to us as he floated slowly past.

The pretty lady is the wife of another philosopher, a Fellow of Wadham.

We slipped home down the stream in the sunset. A lovely blue haze lay over and about Oxford. Even Keble Chapel became a picturesque object seen across the Park in the gathering mist. But it would be better away. It is too high, too straight, too red. It is out of harmony with that Oxford which we are beginning to know and to love.

Friday

This morning early came Mrs. Codlicott

to ask us, with many curtsies and apologies, whether we would mind moving to-morrow into the other sitting-room. Mr. Enderby has written to ask her whether she can take him in for a week or so. 'He says he wants to do some reading and he wants to be amongst his own books and that, and I haven't the 'eart not to disappoint him of his own room, though I don't like a-disturbing of you two ladies neither,' says the good soul.

We are sorry to leave our dear little room, for though, as Mrs. Codlicott says, 'there isn't not a pin to choose between 'em' as to shape and size, the two real occupants must be very different indeed. So now we are to step into the shoes, or rather to rest our feet upon the stools, of Courtney of Exeter. In crossing the tiny passage to his room we seem to have stepped into quite another side of University life from that of Mr. Enderby.

From a casual inspection of Mr. Courtney's domain we judge that his tastes are sporting and his habits athletic. Prints and photographs of horses and dogs hang upon the walls in company with a portion of the boat in which he once rowed for his college. He is, Mrs. Codlicott tells us, 'a science gentleman, and I truly hope he won't blow himself up at that old museum as so many of 'em does.'

What few books he possesses beyond his working ones are some rather tattered sixpenny novels. He has not spent his money on Pater and Ruskin, Stevenson and Browning. He has a taste for the stage or, at any rate, for pretty actresses, and one imagines from some autograph photographs that he would like to value himself on a personal acquaintance with some of them.

To-morrow, then, we shall see Mr. Enderby, he on his small lawn and we on

ours. It will not be so ideal as having the little garden wholly to ourselves. 'One cannot have everything in this world of compromises,' says the philosophic Brownie.

We went to see Miss Smith at Lady Margaret. The approach to it is not romantic. We bicycled past rows of red-brick villas, much trimmed with ampe-lopsis and set in neat gardens behind iron railings. Hitherto we have only seen it from the Cherwell, whence its high red building makes it an imposing and not unpicturesque object.

Miss Smith's room was in this building looking across the river to the hills. Such a pretty room it was, with a low, deep window-seat. All her books and private possessions are packed up ready to go away, but she showed us the rooms of two other students full of books and pictures and gay with bright draperies.

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We saw their tiny chapel, with its copy of the Lady Margaret's tomb. Do you know, I wonder, who the Lady Margaret was? If you do not, and it is no shame to you if you don't, I will tell you when we meet again and I fill up all the gaps in this true tale.

We rode off again to keep our appointment with Miss Jones at Somerville.

There they have no river front, but they have a lovely garden full of trees and shady corners. The old house in which they started is nearly hidden by the new building. Miss Jones's room was in the west buildings at the further end of the garden.

Between the two blocks of buildings there is a noble library with a loggia under it. They have some good portraits of wardens and benefactors hanging in their dining-hall. Miss Jones told us that they could find occupation for a millionaire

and his millions if such an one should place himself at their disposal. He might found fellowships and scholarships for them. He should have his reward in their blessings, and his portrait (were he tolerably well-looking) should hang in their hall among the learned women whose presence now adorns it.

‘Just,’ said Miss Jones, ‘as the picture of Devorguilla hangs in the hall of Balliol among all the learned men.’

We said to each other, when we had taken grateful leave of Miss Jones, that we must see Balliol Hall and this Devorguilla of whom she speaks. We must really begin our sight-seeing in earnest soon. Just now the river is too beautiful to leave, and we and the tea-basket are off to the punt.

Friday, later

We were sitting on our little lawn

sipping our coffee this evening when the door in the wall was hurriedly opened and in came Mr. Bent.

‘Enderby! Enderby!’ he cried. ‘Are you there? I heard that you were coming up.’

Here he stopped abruptly, somewhat taken aback, for his impetuous rush had nearly landed him amongst our coffee-cups.

Then his eyes fell upon Brownie, and a gleam of recognition came into them.

‘Why, surely,’ he said, ‘you are not?’

‘Yes, I am,’ said Brownie. ‘I am Old Brown’s daughter, and you are Anthony Bent, are you not? And do you actually remember me?’ said she. ‘Why, it must be twenty years since last we met.’

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I did remember you, didn’t I? And why didn’t you let me know that you were coming to Oxford?’

‘We never supposed that you would be here in the Long Vacation,’ said Brownie ;

‘we expected to have Oxford all to ourselves, didn’t we, Barbara? May I introduce you to Miss Barbara Burke?’ said she.

‘And won’t you,’ I said, ‘have some coffee?’

‘Thank you,’ he said, ‘I will.’

So we all sat down together, and he and Brownie fell to talking of old times at Marlborough, when he was head of the school and she a little girl with a pigtail down her back.

He told us that Mr. Enderby is the son of an old college friend of his. He took the best first of his year in Greats last summer. He has just done equally well in History. Now he is coming up to do some reading for a Fellowship examination.

Mr. Bent had expected him to arrive to-day, hence his dramatic entry into our garden. Mr. Bent seems to think that it

is somewhat of a privilege for us to be lodging in the same house with such a paragon.

‘The most brilliant man of his year, and such a charming fellow.’

Mr. Bent is staying here for another week, and then he is off to the Tyrol. He has asked us to luncheon in the Common Room at Oriel on Tuesday. That will give him time, he says, to see who is ‘up’ and to ask a few Oxford people to meet us. We told him how keen we are on hearing and seeing all we can that is most characteristic of Oxford.

So we shall still have some human interest. We who were going to live so retired from the world on our totally manless holiday!

Verily woman proposes and then the Fates go and arrange otherwise for her.

‘Brownie,’ I said, when Mr. Bent had scribbled a note for Mr. Enderby and the

gate had finally clicked behind him, 'we have been here now for five days and we have seen no sights at all; we might just as well have stayed at Ballinacragga reading *The Colleges of Oxford* and Alden's *Oxford Guide*; we should then really have known rather more about Oxford than we know now. We must begin early to-morrow morning to fill our minds and feed our eyes. What will Aunt Camilla say if we don't soon justify our existence here? We must begin at the beginning.

'Where is the beginning?' said Brownie.

'The beginning,' said I, 'is Alfred's Jewel. We haven't time to begin further back than Alfred. The guide-book calls it an undoubted relic of that monarch. We will go to the Ashmolean Museum to-morrow and see this jewel. Remember, Brownie,' I said, 'that we are going to lunch in the company of dons and of the

wives of dons. How can we converse intelligently with them if we know and have seen nothing of the history and antiquities of their University?’

‘And I, for my part,’ said Brownie, ‘I must see the Dodo. When my dear old great-aunt Priscilla heard that I was coming to Oxford, she begged that I would make a point of going to see the Dodo.’

‘Not a live one?’ said I.

‘Oh! no,’ said she, ‘dead and stuffed these many hundred years. But I must find out where it is now and go to visit the remains. Every one has her own point of view, and to my Aunt Priscilla Oxford is merely the shrine of the last of the Dodos. I wouldn’t disappoint her for all the world.’

‘To-morrow, then, it is settled that we go to seek the Dodo and Alfred’s Jewel.’

Saturday

To-day has come and gone and we have seen no jewel, while by us the Dodo still remains unvisited. We had just finished breakfast, and Brownie was composing our menu for Sunday, when the little Zilpah announced, 'Mr. Bent, m'm, if you do please, m'm.' He apologised for making so early a visit, and said that it had suddenly occurred to him that we might like to see the Vice-Chancellor conferring degrees, which he would be doing at ten o'clock to-day in the Convocation House. This was why we had heard the bell of the University Church sounding very slowly all the morning.

Mr. Bent took us off at once, so that we might see all there was to be seen.

The first thing that we saw was the Vice-Chancellor himself coming in a stately manner along Broad Street. An official with a silver mace preceded him.

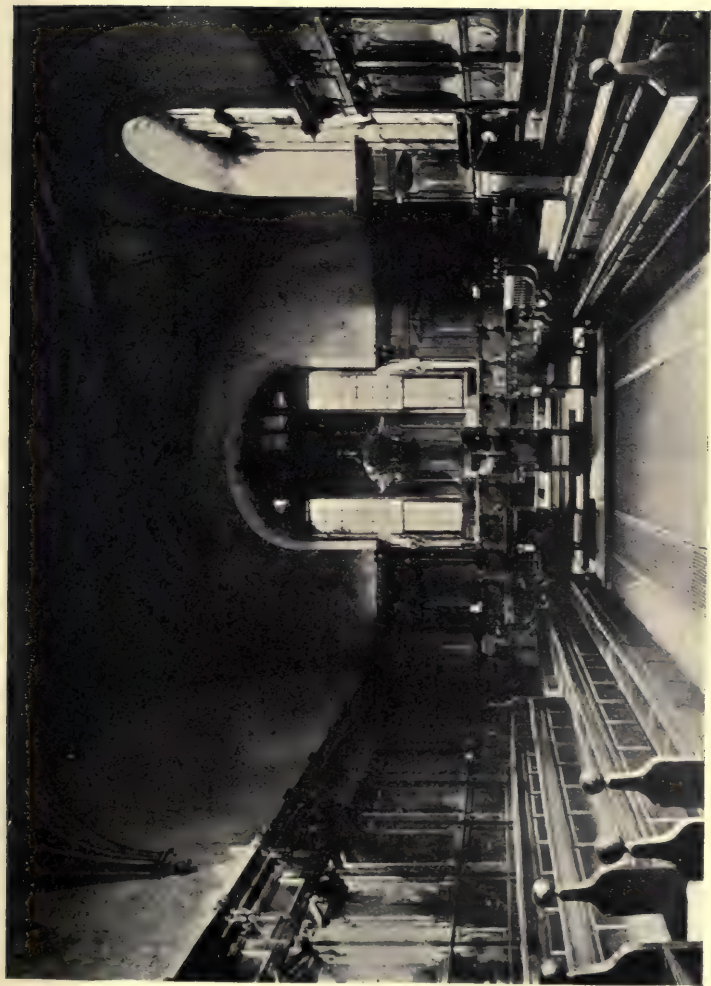
When a large number of men are taking their degree the ceremony takes place in the Divinity School or the Sheldonian Theatre. To-day there were but few, so it will be in the Convocation House.

Mr. Bent had brought us early so that we might linger for a little while in the apodyterium or robing-room. It is a very high stone chamber, panelled with dark oak, and dimly lighted.

We saw the candidates for the degree paying their fees to the curator of the university chest, who sat in a corner in the receipt of much money.

Important-looking officials, called Bedels, dressed in ample black gowns, directed the proceedings.

The Convocation House was built by Archbishop Laud in 1635. The panelled walls are dim and dark, and all round three sides of it there runs a triple row of oaken seats.



THE CONGREGATION HOUSE

The sun came in through a southern window, the mullions of which were outlined with green leaves. Beyond there lay a shadowy garden.

We sat under a window midway up the room. We could see out across the apodyterium and through the outer door. It was like a picture by de Hoogh, the cool dark interior and the sunlit square beyond, the figures in gowns, some in black and some in scarlet, passing out of the sunlight into the shade.

A little group of B.A.'s in furry white hoods sat on the right of the door, a larger group of incipient B.A.'s on the left. These last wore white ties and very solemn expressions.

On some raised seats at the further end sat Doctors in their scarlet robes. The sunlight fell upon the snowy head of one of them. A flustered lady seated herself 'in a mistake,' as Jenkins would say, on

one of these raised seats. She was removed and put in her proper place by a scandalised official.

An authoritative voice from without called upon an unseen some one to 'Remove the name of Mr. Briggs of Jesus.' Was Briggs no more? or had he breakfasted too late? We shall never know.

The clock struck ten. Out of the sunlight and into the shadowed room came the Vice-Chancellor's procession. First, with his silver mace, the bland and dignified person who is called by correct persons the Vice-Chancellor's servant, and by the irreverent the poker man. Following him came the two proctors, with velvet sleeves to their gowns and white linen bands at their necks. Then came the registrar bearing a large book.

The Vice-Chancellor sat on a high canopied chair with his back to the window, the proctors on either hand a little below him.

The Vice-Chancellor spoke—gracious words, no doubt, but in the Latin tongue.

He and the Proctors stood up and raised their caps. ‘*Dissolvimus hanc Convocationem ; fiat Congregatio,*’ said the Vice-Chancellor as they came down from the high chairs and sat upon three a little lower down.

Mr. Bent told us that they had been transacting some Convocation business in the upper chairs. When they came down they were ready to start on the degrees which are conferred by the Ancient House of Congregation. This you must in no way confound with the Congregation of the University. I hope that I make this clear to you. It is not at all clear to me.

The Registrar read a long list of names, the Christian names latinised. One Proctor read out the ‘*Supplicat*’—that is, the petition of the candidates to be allowed to graduate.

‘Supplicat venerabili Congregationi Doctorum et Magistrorum regentium’—these were fine rolling words with which it began. Now the Proctors performed the strangest little dance half-way down the room and back again. This is, in theory, a formal asking for the consent of the existing M.A.’s to the admission into their order of the candidates for the degree. You can read in the classic pages of *Verdant Green* another meaning for the proctorial promenade, but this which I give you is undoubtedly the correct one.

The Proctors went through this part of the ceremony with varying degrees of grace. With one the little walk became a stately prance; with the other it degenerated into a shamefaced amble.

The Regius Professor of Greek came forward and presented a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Letters. This

is, so Mr. Bent told us, the newest thing in degrees. With an elegant wave of the hand, and with bows to the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors, three bows in all, he thus began: '*Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie vosque egregii Procuratores, praesento vobis.*' The Proctor addressed the candidate, and he was hurried away to have his new gown put on; he reappeared, attired in scarlet and grey—a truly frightful mixture; he shook hands with the Vice-Chancellor, and retired to sit among his gratified relations.

The Proctors pranced again, and the Bedel called upon the candidates for the M.A. degree to come forward. Encouraged from in front and pushed gently from behind they came.

The Dean of each college was called upon to introduce his batch.—'Balliol College, Dean'—'Exeter College, Dean'

—‘Christ Church, Censor’—called the Bedel.

It was very funny to watch the different way in which the little ceremony was performed. Some said the short Latin speech of introduction to the Vice-Chancellor distinctly and clearly; they turned with an appropriate gesture to their group of young specimens, seeming to say, ‘See! this is the superior kind of thing that we can turn out at our establishment.’ Others hung their heads and mumbled their words, so that one fancied they might be saying, ‘I am greatly ashamed to present you with such very sorry stuff; but, indeed, it is the best that we can do in this line at present.’ The Proctor then addressed them and administered an oath to them. Then the poker man distributed books to the candidates. In batches of four they knelt at the feet of the Vice-Chancellor, each on a little stool, and he tapped them

each on the head with a New Testament, and admitted them to the Arts degree : 'Ad honorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et ad profectum sacrosanctae matris ecclesiae et studii.'

So they became Masters of Arts.

They all went out, and through the open door we saw them being hastily dressed in their new gowns by their attendant scouts. The poker went down to the door and fetched them back again, all in their black and crimson hoods.

Then came the turn of the Bachelors. There were many more of them, and the officials evidently felt about them as the waiter felt about Traddles—that they were very junior indeed. They were audibly requested to 'hurry up, gentlemen.' They were pushed and poked into a compact little mass. The Junior Proctor instructed them and exhorted them. The Vice-Chancellor admitted them all in a bunch.

They bowed as seemed best to them, and all was over. Then the procession re-formed, and we trooped out after it into the sun.

It was one of the most agreeable ceremonies at which I have ever assisted. The picturesque and stately surroundings, the unaccustomed incomprehensibilities of the Latin words, and the antique forms made it most impressive. One felt quite Rip-van-Winkleish on coming out into the ordinary world again.

Many of the ladies among whom we sat were evidently the mothers, sisters, or sweethearts of the new Masters and Bachelors. A maiden beside me uttered an ecstatic though subdued cry of 'That's him!' when Willelmus Enricus Jones appeared in all the white glory of his hood.

Alas! that classic walls and cultured ears should hear such grammar!

It is said that some misguided, progressive, up-to-date persons would like to get rid of all these forms and ceremonies. They say that they are unnecessary and obstructive, and that they take up the time which might be better devoted to hockey or to science.

I myself cannot understand such a frame of mind.

Think, for instance, of the solemn tolling of St. Mary's bell before the assembling of Congregation. From a strictly utilitarian point of view it is certainly a useless survival. Now the Member of Congregation who dwells afar off in the Parks reads in his copy of the *University Gazette* that Congregation or Convocation will assemble on such a day and at such an hour. But when the House first met there were no Parks and no Park dwellers. The sound of the bell announced to all whom it might concern that business was going

forward, and that they would do well to hurry to their places. Some day Mr. Bent will show us the old Congregation House under the shadow of St. Mary's spire.

I am all for progress and reform, as you so often, dear, deplore, but I do not want to progress along a road denuded of every picturesque symbol, cleared of every reminder of what has been. I hope that even should I live to be very, very aged, I shall still hear that Oxford preserves a few of her ancient prejudices and some of her antique ways.

Some great artist should paint a worthy picture of this assembly before many of the now familiar figures are no more.

Mr. Bent tells us that the scene is naturally far more full of interest in Term time, when the Houses of Convocation and Congregation are sitting. The time to be here is when some great question

comes up for decision before Congregation, which consists of all the resident doctors and masters, and meets every Tuesday. The qualification of residence covers a fairly wide field, comprising as it does most of the Oxford curates and many people who simply reside here, unemployed in any university capacity. These are sometimes whipped up to vote without being very sure of the reason why, and they may be seen on the steps of the Convocation House anxiously inquiring, 'Do I vote *placet* or *non placet*'?

Very few years pass without some storm in a smaller or larger tea-cup. Occasionally it rises to a hurricane, as it did when the burning question of women's degrees was discussed.

Sometimes there is a still greater commotion when Convocation or the whole body of university graduates assembles

to decide some matter. The great fight over the building of laboratories in which vivisection might be practised was one such time. The battle over the spire of St. Mary's was another mighty struggle. It was then that William Morris came up, and hurled himself into the fray, inspired by his passionate love of the beautiful Oxford of the Middle Ages.

After this we went to see the Divinity School—a noble fifteenth-century hall. Before the Reformation its windows were all aglow with stained glass, now there is only the lovely sunlighted green of the garden beyond to supply its place.

Above all this group of buildings is the Bodleian Library ; to this the good Mr. Bent now conducted us ; up and up we went, and round and round ; now and again we came to a window, whence we could look down into the quadrangle below and at the faces of many tourists

upturned in admiration, here and there was a little bench for weary limbs to rest on, for the stairs were many. We left one tourist at the bottom protesting fretfully, 'I will go up no more steps; take me to see something on the ground floor.' Her guide entreated her to take courage, and added, with some glozing of the facts, 'There are only a few more stairs to be ascended, madam.'

Through a green baize door we entered upon a realm of great delight.

I should think that Dominie Sampson would have prayed that he might never go to heaven had Providence in its goodness seen fit to make him Bodley's librarian.

Never went I before into such a very paradise of books. The atmosphere seemed to be composed of the thoughts and feelings of centuries of book-lovers.

I thought of Charles Lamb, and how

he too wandered here in Vacation. Of how he met with 'D.,' who 'with long poring was grown almost into a book.'

There is but one serpent in this paradise, and that is want of pence to buy more books and ever more books, so that the hungry scholar may not be sent empty away.

A long narrow chamber with a high and very splendid wooden roof: a wooden gallery supported on pillars: midway a noble eastern window with fragments of the stained glass that once filled it: this was the part open to the public. There were portraits on the walls—I remember particularly one of Shelley, and in a case near it is that copy of Sophocles which was in his hand when the fatal squall struck the boat.

The readers sit in that part of the library which is over the Divinity School. At the end of this is another long piece,

so that the whole is in the shape of the letter H. Bookcases projecting between the windows formed little cells for the readers to sit in ; some of them were quite hidden by the piles of books which they had built up around them ; they had the air of human moles burrowing into mounds of books.

Very gingerly and silently we followed our guide along this lane of learning. We could not have passed through the low lattice gates which fence in Duke Humphrey's Library had we been on a merely tourist basis, but Mr. Bent in his cap and gown could open all doors for us.

‘Profoundly blessed,’ thought I, ‘must be the people who sit here all day long and read ; surely learning must steal insensibly into their minds if it is not already there ; surely the least grateful amongst them and the least reverent

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must send up a little psalm of praise and thanksgiving when his eye lights upon Bodley's portrait, and his thoughts go back over all that Bodley did for the lover of books.

We paid our little tribute of love and admiration to Bodley's portrait, and we gazed at Bodley's bell, which still rings out at closing time.

The librarians have little studies to sit in behind drawn green curtains, and they have windows which look down into the green garden of Exeter College.

Happy readers! Thrice happy librarians! How I envied a girl who was consulting a volume of the mighty catalogue. She had a little air of wisdom and aloofness from the world which was infinitely charming. I dare say that really she is not a bit cleverer than any other girl. I dare say that she has long ceased to feel the special charm of her surround-

ings, and to remember what a lucky girl she is.

More joys awaited us above. Here are three long galleries full of treasures and of curiosities, of portraits of prelates and statesmen, of poets and of dreamers.

I remember most clearly the shrewd, clever Scotch face of Flora Macdonald, a glorious portrait by Watts of a Marquis of Lothian, and the wonderful pall of cloth of gold and Tudor roses and portcullises which covered the coffin of Henry the Seventh. Here they keep the iron chest, with its elaborate lock, in which good Sir Thomas Bodley kept his reserve of golden money. There were wonderful glimpses to be had from the windows of university buildings and colleges, and now and again of the tree-capped hills beyond. I would have liked to spend all the morning here, sitting in a window-seat under the glorious bronze statue of

the Earl of Pembroke, watching the tourists as they trooped along, and listening to their comments.

As we came out we saw another familiar feature of Oxford life, an Oxford guide. He was taking round a party of eager tourists. They had just bestowed a hurried five minutes on the Bodleian, and were in full flight to see the spot on which Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley gave their bodies to be burned. We listened for a while to the informing discourse of the guide, and to the 'Ach! so' of the Germans and the 'Say! were they burned right here?' of the American part of his clients. Brownie's countrymen contributed the 'Oh, really!' of the touring Briton. Three Japanese gentlemen, very small and grave and neat, all armed with Baedekers, gave a cosmopolitan touch to the group.

There is a story of one of these guides,



THE CHERWELL

long since dead, who was pointing out Balliol to a party.

‘This, gentlemen and ladies,’ said he, ‘is Balliol College; there is the Master’s house; that is his study window.’ Then, as he threw a stone lightly upward and an indignant face appeared at the window, ‘That, gentlemen and ladies, is the Master!’

After this full morning spent wholly in our service, we asked Mr. Bent if we might not do something for him. He said that if we were going on the river it would rest him very much to come with us. It made us very happy to be able to return even in this small way some of the pleasure that he has given to us.

We are fast becoming familiar with every turn and bend in Cherwell’s stream, every day we love it more and more. They left the punting to me while they talked over old times and new.

Sunday

To-day we have had abounding peace.

We went to the ten o'clock service at the Cathedral. Here we sat in the stalls which would be occupied, were it Term time, by the students and members of Christ Church, for the Cathedral is also the College Chapel of 'The House' or Aedes Christi. It is very small, and there seems to be less of what Ruskin calls 'jar-ring vergerism' about it than there is about most English cathedrals. How can misguided modern folk build the meaningless churches that too often defile our land while there are such examples as this one before them?

Do you remember some one's suggestion that we should honour a great man, not by putting up a new statue to his memory, but by pulling down an old one?

Oh, if we could but pull down some of our modern churches to the Glory of God and to the great gain of His people!

Were I an autocrat I would away with some of the meanest and ugliest of the present churches without any further delay. I would preserve, not restore, the beautiful old ones. I would allow none to be built except a very few ; on these should be lavished, with all possible care, all that was best in contemporary art. It is only human to value most what we find it most difficult to obtain. An occasional and not too easily managed journey to a distant and perfect shrine would be, I feel sure, a more acceptable act of worship than a daily or weekly amble to the church round the corner.

In these few perfect churches I would have a perfect service constantly ascending heavenwards. When people had cause to rejoice greatly, it would seem natural and right to them to go up to the Temple and give thanks ; if any were forlorn, they would go to seek comfort in the outward expression of an inward peace.

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I would allow a sufficiency of plain little meeting-houses where people might gather together if they wished to pray or praise in company, and as centres for social effort. But I would allow no emulation of one mediocre choir against another a degree less bad ; no rivalry as to which could have most ciphers and stucco twiddlings and the largest number of handsome articles out of a church furniture shop.

Who would not barter all the brass candlesticks and crosses and brazen eagles that are turned out by the hundred for one of the sculptured oak leaves from St. Frideswide's shrine?

Thus held I forth to Brownie when we had tied our punt to a tree and lay at ease among the cushions.

Brownie agreed with me because it was too hot to argue, not because she was convinced by my most convincing talk ; for Brownie comes of clergy stock and loves

to have parson and parish all complete and proper.

It is stupid to go on arguing all alone, and when my tongue at last was still Brownie forgave my foolishness and read to me the story of St. Frideswide, Virgin and Patroness of Oxford.

Frideswide, the beautiful Saxon saint, who founded her nunnery where Christ Church stands to-day. Beautiful Frideswide, who fled from the wicked Earl Algar and hid with her maidens in a wood near Abingdon : she passed from thence in a boat up the Isis, left her own dear home among the swampy meadows and went up the stream to Binsey.

I forgot my carping mood and fancied myself back in Frideswide's time. The water from the hills flowed down into Cherwell's stream then even as it does now, though there are now no angel boatmen to succour ladies in distress as there

were in Frideswide's day. One day we too will go down the stream to Abingdon where she went, and up the stream to Bisney, where, at her prayers, water gushed forth, and where there is a holy well at this day. I will bring you the little book in which Father Goldie has recorded her undying history, and out of which Brownie read it to me this day. Indeed, I must bring quite a library of big books and little books to help you to realise all that we have seen and done. I must bring you, too, countless photographs to supplement my poor powers of description.

But were I to talk for ever and to show you pictures for all time, the half, and more than the half, of the charm and the joy of Oxford would still be unrevealed to you.

As we came home we met Mr. Bent. He had been to call upon us and to ask a favour of us. Would we help in the entertainment of certain foreign persons,

some of importance and some not, who are coming to-morrow to see Oxford? They are members of some learned society, and the people who are looking after them in London had not told the Oxford entertainers that there were so many of them, neither had they mentioned until the last moment that their women-folk accompanied them. On this account our poor services would be of value to supplement those of the scanty remnant now left in Oxford. It was a somewhat bizarre notion that we, who know nothing about our surroundings, should try to display their beauties to others: after all, however, we comforted ourselves, they are but poor ignorant foreigners, we shall doubtless muddle through somehow.

Mr. Bent, too, was so reassuring on the prospect of our power to 'make ourselves pleasant.' Anyway, we have promised, and we must try to perform.

Mr. Enderby, who arrived last night, was with Mr. Bent. I refrained from pointing out to Brownie that he is my Enderby of the Celtic head and the up-standing hair. It is pleasant to be right, even in so small a matter. I was very meek, though; I did not even say, 'I told you so.'

This is the end of our first week—an unpleasant thought that will intrude upon us when least we want it; I shall keep it as much in the back of my mind as is possible: for the future I shall not put the day of the week at the head of my paper, and I shall honestly try to forget how the days pass. Rather an ostrich-like way of forgetting, you will think, but it will serve for a time.

SECOND WEEK

And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade ;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

IT is not a little absurd. We have been here for seven days and we have seen but a fraction of the place ; on the eighth day here are we offering to show the sights of the town to the members of the Society for the Proper Study of Ethical Problems and Social Phenomena.

If it were not such a deadly serious situation it would be a broadly comic one. However, we buoyed ourselves up with good food and with wise saws.

‘ Nothing venture, nothing have,’ said Brownie ; and ‘ Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,’ said I.

One of our duties was to meet the party

at the station. That, at least, was within our capabilities.

‘ Please, how many languages shall we be expected to speak ? ’ we had asked Mr. Bent overnight, but he had given us no definite answer.

We took them first to Christ Church, where a most amiable young man had been told off to meet us. French is evidently no part of the general equipment of the Oxford Don ; and mine, as you know, is of the Stratford-*atte*-Bowe variety. We eked out what we had with pleasant smiles and amiable ejaculations.

I tried to translate some of the beauty of the story of St. Frideswide when we were taken to see all that remains of her shrine and the wooden watching chamber which is needed now no more to guard its scattered treasures. They even tore up and threw out her bones in the fury of the Reformation. A pious hand has put a



CHRIST CHURCH, FROM CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE

small brass in the floor of the chapel to mark the place where they lay. We saw the window in which Burne-Jones* and William Morris have recorded her history in glowing colour. I tried to transmit some of the glamour that her tale has cast over me to my fellow-pilgrims, but with scant success : it takes time to make one think of an eighth-century saint as of a living girl, not merely a painted figure in a window.

Our guide showed us the Bible given by the daughters of Dean Liddell and the window in memory of one of them. One of the three was 'Alice in Wonderland.' The figure of her creator, beloved of many generations of children, has passed into the ranks of the not readily forgotten. There was a pleasant little American student of Ethical Problems who came with me to search for his portrait in the hall. He was Lewis Carroll to all the

countless world of his readers, but to his university and his college he was the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

From the hall we went to the kitchen. Such a marvellous thing in kitchens, almost unaltered since the time of Cardinal Wolsey, who built it.

This kitchen seemed to touch a vein of sentiment in one of the German ladies of the party, who had hitherto been left singularly cold by all that had been shown to her. She sighed with such a heavy kind of joy that I ventured to ask her what it was that moved her so.

‘Ach!’ said she, ‘what a fire! It warms the heart to think of all the good dinners that have been cooked at it.’

So true it is, as I think I may have observed before, that there is something in this wonderful place which, sooner or later, touches the right chord in each one of us.

We could but glance at chapter-house and cloister and at the treasures of the library. We more fortunate ones will return again to gaze and admire.

One of our section of the party was an ardent Ruskinian. He reminded me as we came out again into the blazing sunshine that in January 1837 a slender blue-eyed youth, in the silk gown and velvet cap of a Gentleman-Commoner, entered into command of his own life in his own rooms in Peckwater. Peckwater is the name of the quadrangle in which we were then standing. We fell, of course, into sudden and complete friendship, though I felt that I ought to have remembered all this for myself and should not have needed to be reminded of it by any Frenchman.

After Christ Church we were to take them to New College. It seemed to strike the imagination of our friends that this college, founded five hundred years

ago, and with a proper name of its own, should still be known as New College. It gives the observer a curious sense of the antiquity and the conservatism of Oxford.

We wended our way therefore to 'Saint Marie Colledge of Wynchester in Oxford,' commonly called New College.

The approach to it is very perfect, through a lane which is full of sharp turns between high stone walls.

The tower of the college is one of those which stood, like that of St. Michael's Church, beside the city wall. It looked grandly down on us as we came into the lane. Then we lost sight of it, and a sharp turn brought us to the gate of the college. There was a queer smell floating on the air, which one of our number pronounced to be the smell of beer; he was a German, so we felt that his opinion on the subject of beer

merited attention. But brewing in the heart of the University was surely a most strange thing! Brewing, however, it undoubtedly was; even our slower English noses began to tell us so; also, not only the smell, but the very fumes of it came pouring out of a deep archway on our right. We ventured to poke our heads in and to ask the meaning of this strange occurrence.

‘Brewing strong ale for the college, miss,’ said a polite person who was superintending the operation.

‘Curiouser! and curiouser!’ said we. ‘Shall we never come to an end of all the odd things that can be seen in this city of survivals and surprises?’

Then we went in through the gate of the college; over it the Virgin, with the Angel Gabriel and the Founder, keeps watch and ward.

Here we were met by more kind and

informing persons, and we were split up into groups, some of us going first to the chapel and some to the hall. I went with a few of those who were bound first for the chapel. I won't descant upon the beauties of the Reynolds window, it will be more practical to bring you a photograph of some of the figures in it. The hall is splendid. What a fine thing, though rather awe-inspiring, it must be to come for the first time to your dinner in such an imposing dining-room.

Through an open door we passed into the cloister. On the north side rises the tower, in the midst there is cool green turf, in one corner there is a grave shadowed by an ilex. We must go there again without so many chattering tongues.

We took our contingent into the garden, and left them in that abode of peace, under the shadow of the old city wall.

They were to be sorted out into companies and taken to various colleges for lunch. Great was the chattering and commotion and great the talk before they were formed into approximately right groups of the proper size.

This afternoon the *Pons Asinorum* came into play. Helped by Mr. Bent and Mr. Enderby, with two borrowed boats, we took some of the party to spend a lazy afternoon on the Cherwell.

Brownie made the tea, aided with an excellent will but a small amount of practical ability by Mr. Bent. Mr. Enderby and I made conversation, though not very much was needed. The social investigators gave themselves up to the spirit of holiday, and rollicked and laughed uproariously.

My Ruskinian friend insisted upon his right as a man and a Frenchman to

relieve 'Cette belle Irlandaise' (he meant me, dear) from the onerous duty of punting the party. This would in itself have been a gallant action, but it became a heroic one when we found that never before had he seen a punt.

His compatriots in the other boats admired the performance from as great a distance as they could manage to put between themselves and us. We arrived somehow at the bank, and we persuaded the hero to play at being a passenger on the way back.

We saw them all off at the station with much exchanging of cards and hopes for future meetings.

We asked our friends, as we came back to our dear little home, whether they often had such incursions. They said that it is the penalty they have to pay occasionally for living in the most lovely and beguiling of places.

We are just starting out to go to our luncheon-party. We have not spent the morning in studying Oxford with a view to intellectual conversation; it has been employed in trimming Brownie's hat.

I was quite determined that she should look her best. Although she declared that what she had already was 'quite suitable,' I decided otherwise.

The main parts of her costume were neat and unobtrusive, as they always are, and made an excellent background for my artistic activities. With a little touch here and a little touch there I have given her just that effect of a Quaker lady out on the spree which ought, to my mind, to be her distinctive charm.

Brownie never was meant to be a secretary-bird all her life long. Mr. Brownie may come out of the Anywhere into the Here at any moment, and when least one

is looking for him. Anyway, it shall be through no fault of mine if Brownie rushes on her fate in an unbecoming hat.

I should love to discourse to you, here and now, on my Philosophy of Hats: on the importance of the Hat as an index of character; of the Hat considered as a determining factor in the fate of the Woman; of the Hat—in fine—in all its relations with the world.

It is, however, of lunches and not of hats that I had meant to sing, and to lunches we must now return. I will only remark in passing that many a young life has been spoilt because t'other pin has not been put in the right place at the right moment.

For myself, I trust that I was clothed neatly and becomingly to play the part of 'Miss Browne's young friend.' A High School Mistress out for a holiday was what I hoped to be taken for.

I trust that no one will ask for further particulars or seek to gauge my intellectual fitness for the part.

We have had a most excellent day.

The luncheon was in the common room at Oriel. Portraits of Cardinal Newman, of Matthew Arnold, and of Froude looked down on us from the walls. Oxford is not nearly so empty as we had supposed that it would be: we were quite a large party—eight men and six women.

A merry young woman sat on Mr. Bent's right hand. She owed her exalted position to the fact that she was 'a last Term's Bride.' I heard her tell Mr. Bent that she has chosen her maids for apparently irrelevant reasons—her cook for her sweet smile and her housemaid for her sense of humour.

'And has your plan answered?' he asked.

‘Oh yes, excellently!’ she answered. ‘I have given cooking lessons to the cook, but I never could have taught her to be sweet-tempered; and I can instruct the housemaid in her duties, but to train her to see a joke would have been impossible.’

Brownie sat on Mr. Bent’s left hand, and on her left sat Mr. Lefevre. How little we thought, when we passed golden hours reading his exquisite prose, that we should ever behold him. A rapturously pretty person sat on his other hand; her eyes were bright with seeming intelligence, and her lips seemed formed to give utterance to witty speech; her talk, however, was the veriest dribble.

‘I have been married six years,’ Brownie heard her say, ‘and I have five little children.’

‘Indeed!’ said Mr. Lefevre.

Then she poured the daily diary of her

nursery into the politely attentive ears of our idol. Little Cynthia's wise remarks, little Roland's hairbreadth escapes, even baby's sufferings with his teeth served her as conversational material ; she used it lavishly, feeling sure, no doubt, that it could not fail to interest and please.

Mr. Lefevre took refuge in his luncheon, which was of most consoling quality ; he seemed honestly to enjoy it. It is a foolish feeling, no doubt, which makes one find something of a lost illusion in watching one's literary idol enjoy his victuals. Nothing could have stemmed the flow of the lovely lady's speech, and a few civil ejaculations at intervals were all that she required from her interlocutor.

Once he broke loose, and asked Brownie whether she had been to see the circus. They rose to no greater

conversational heights. Perhaps, as Boswell says of Doctor Johnson, he is like a great mill, and ordinary minds are not fertile enough to furnish corn for his to grind.

The general talk turned mainly upon plans for spending the rest of the Long Vacation. They all spoke as though Constantinople were round the next corner, and even the youngest of them seemed to have been everywhere and to have seen everything. Bosnia and Herzegovina are to them as Devonshire and the Channel Islands are to us less-travelled folk.

They all talked very easily—perhaps I might almost say glibly—about books, and even more about the writers of books. There was a Balliol man—very modest and affable, and not too superior to tell funny stories and to laugh heartily in the telling of them. On one side of

me there was a youthful parson who looked like a saint who had forgotten to put on his nimbus ; on the other was our co-lodger, Mr. Enderby.

He is quite as nice as his books and pictures had led us to expect that he would be. He was full of interesting talk, and delightfully interested in everything.

He is evidently as fond of Mr. Bent as Mr. Bent is of him. 'The very best fellow on earth,' he called him. He added, with all the pride of a Balliol man, 'Had I not been a scholar of Balliol I should like to have been at Oriel under Bent.'

I have accounted for his Celtic head and his Irish look. His grandmother was an Irishwoman from county Galway. He has never been to Ireland, but he showed a most proper longing to go. He belongs to a College Gaelic Society, and is as Irish as circumstances will allow him

to be. Mr. Bent introduced me to an alarmingly grave and silent man. I attempted to open a conversation by saying that the day was exceedingly fine ; he pondered for a long minute, and then said, 'That is a very just remark.' I was too chilled to venture on anything more likely to promote an interesting discussion, and, as he really seemed to think that being at a party was an excellent opportunity for a little quiet meditation, I deemed it better and kinder to let him meditate while I listened to those who talked.

The graceful lady of the punt was there. Her husband is deep in examination work, and they cannot get away until September. She has asked us to take tea with her in her old-fashioned house at Holywell. Not for worlds, she protested, would she be a Park dweller.

'I should feel,' she said, 'just like the

wife of some City clerk whose husband goes off to his work in the morning and leaves her all forlorn until evening brings him home once more ; now I am so near to everything, and my husband rushes in and out all day long.' We could well imagine that he took every opportunity of seeing any one so pretty and so nice. He was a large, impetuous man with a mop of curly hair. We ventured to ask her what he lectured about ; she told us 'Ethics and Moral Philosophy' ; this sounded dreadfully abstract, but he looked a most human person. I cannot report any words of his wisdom, for he only said 'humph !' or 'ha !' in answer to all our well-intentioned remarks. His wife says that he is always much overworked, and that in Term time he gets no peace of his life at all.

'It is not his lecturing work that drives him wild,' she said, 'but that

serving of tables which has to be done by some one in every college. He has to apportion the rooms, and you can't think how particular some of the men are; what contented their grandfathers is not nearly good enough for them. Certainly some of what they call their 'bedders' are very small; one man told me that he had to have his bath on his bed; there was no room for it on the floor. It is really not so difficult, though, to content the men. It is when the mothers come up that the real bother begins. They come to help their offspring in the choice of rooms; they punch the beds, they thump the chairs, they reflect with scorn on the size of the rooms, on the way that they are papered, on the condition of the furniture. They ask how often the rooms are 'turned out'; any question, in short, that suggests itself to the housewifely and maternal mind.

‘What a pity,’ said I, ‘that Mr. Oglander should have to wrestle with them. Surely it is you that could manage them very much better?’

‘Well, I shouldn’t like to say that,’ answered she, ‘but I do contrive to be of use sometimes. We once asked the friend of a friend to luncheon: she was thinking of sending her only son to us, so we thought we must be civil. We did not care for the look of the boy, and the mother was a dreadful fussier; I could see that she was calculated to drive any tutor wild.

“Tell me,” she said in confidence, “as one woman speaking to another, as a mother yourself, Mrs. Oglander, and as one who is well aware of the importance of hygienic surroundings for the young of both sexes, how often do you think they dust the rooms in college?”

“I think about once a year,” I answered,

and this was, as Mr. Godley's poem has it, "broadly speaking, true." — "Oh!" said she, and again just "Oh!" and then nothing more. She put her treasure into other keeping, and he turned out very badly, as treasured darlings will. So good came of my words.'

'I think I remember to have been told,' said Brownie, 'that there was some one at Wadham who was very good at looking after the men.'

'Alas!' said Mrs. Oglander, 'it is indeed but too true: my husband has acquired that most fatal reputation. Only last term an unknown woman wrote to him:—

"I have heard from the wife of my dear vicar how good you are to the men who come under your charge. My son, Algernon Percy Jones-Browne, is coming up to sit for your scholarship examination. I feel sure that I can rely upon you

to find a suitable lodging for him. Do be quite sure that the landlady is quite respectable, and do, dear Mr. Oglander, impress upon her the importance of thoroughly airing my dear boy's bed, dear Algy is so terribly susceptible to chills. Do please see, too, that he has a cup of tea and a piece of bread and butter or plain cake directly he comes out of the examination-room. I am sure that I can trust you to see to these little matters, which are so important if Algy is to do himself justice."

'Under such circumstances it becomes a positive necessity that some member of the family should cultivate the art of being disagreeable. If my husband can't, I must.'

The pretty lady set her features into what she intended to be a most determined and ferocious expression.

The luncheon lingered on until it be-

came almost a tea-party. There was so much for us to see and plenty for the others to say.

The walls of the inner common room are covered with pictures and engravings of the great men of Oriel. They achieved greatness in many different ways. Could two people have had more opposite views of life and its possibilities than Beau Brummel and Cardinal Newman? A tiny engraving of the former looks pertly over his high stock at a drawing of the saintly face of the great Cardinal, sometime Fellow and Tutor of Oriel. We saw the hall and the library, and Mr. Bent told us that we should certainly read Mozley's *Reminiscences of Oriel* if we wished to understand something of what the college was in the days of Newman.

We came away at last. Our host and Mr. Enderby walked back with us through

‘The Turl.’ They were rather horrified to hear how little we had seen of Oxford, and how shamefully little we know about it.

They took us into Lincoln and showed us the hall and the chapel. This was Wesley’s college, and here, too, the stream of Robert Montgomery’s muse first meandered level with its fount.

Happy Robert Montgomery! All unconscious of the fate that was to be his—to be remembered only because a great writer used him as material for his satire.

Macaulay does not mention that his victim perpetrated a poem of amazing dullness upon Oxford herself. I found it in the penny shelves of that bookshop in the little street and wondered greatly at it.

We went into the chapel of Exeter and saw the tapestry which Burne-Jones designed and William Morris executed.

They were here together as undergraduates.

They took us into the little garden which is the quiet green space into which one looks from the Bodleian Library. It is the Fellows' Garden, and we were only able to go at our ease as we had Mr. Bent to take us.

Good and generous as the colleges are in the matter of letting the stranger enter within their gates, there must be some bounds set to their goodness. In some cases our guides told us that graceless folk have taken advantage of the simple trustfulness of the college authorities. One don declares that people go into his room and use his hairbrushes. At Queen's College a party of trippers were discovered sitting round the common room table, eating the mixed biscuits of the common room and drinking its soda water.

Mr. Bent said that some one walked

into his room yesterday and made no apology when he found the owner at home.

‘I wanted to see what a college room was like,’ was all that he said.

Our hosts at lunch became our guests at tea. We asked Mr. Enderby too. It was absurd that he should take his tea on his small lawn and we on ours. There is just room for a party of four to sit at ease on our grass patch. They are both doing what they can to fill the most glaring gaps in our knowledge of Oxford ways and traditions. There seems to be a good deal of communal life as regards books, for when Mr. Enderby suggested that we should like to see an account of a visit to Oxford in the late seventeenth century by a certain Celia Fiennes, Mr. Bent said that he had not the book himself, but would get it from Smith’s room. I wonder whether Smith will approve of

having his books lent to a couple of strange women!

I am not sure that I want to read too much about the things that are gone: I know that I don't want to have more regrets than are absolutely necessary.

Mr. Enderby has brought us the *Life of William Morris*, and a little book by him called *The Aims of Art*. These have filled me with misery from their descriptions of the havoc that has been wrought here during the last fifty years.

Had we, too, only come in the fifties we should have found Oxford still remaining an almost mediæval city.

No parks, no suburbs, no trams, no electric light, no horrors of houses—no additions to the colleges themselves in what our guide-book calls 'mixed Gothic.'

It is very bad. It won't bear to be thought of. But then, as Brownie so sensibly remarks in answer to my wails—

‘Let us be truly thankful for what we are receiving. You might just as well waste your time in being glad that you are not here fifty years hence as in being sorry that it is not fifty years ago. Consider, too, Barbara, that if times did not change manners we should not be here at all, the elegant females of the Victorian era could not have traped about the country on such a jaunt as this of ours. Don’t,’ said she, ‘expect to eat your cake and have it too. Take the goods the Gods provide ye.’

Thus spake the wise, the philosophic Brownie when we sat in the window listening to great ‘Tom’ bell as it tolled at nine o’clock. One hundred and one times it tolls: great Tom, which came from Osney Abbey to hang in the gate tower of Christ Church.

‘Why does Tom toll a hundred and one times?’ we asked Mrs. Codlicott.

‘Because it always ’as, miss,’ she replied, in all confidence that we need ask no more.

Further research, however, told us that it tolls once for each of the original number of men on the foundation.

Naturally we do miss something by not being here in Term. We should be awakened then by chapel bells in the morning, and we should hear them again as we lay in our punt on the Cherwell after tea. We might have gone, too, to service at Magdalen and at New College.

‘One can’t expect to have everything in this world below,’ said Brownie, when I pointed out our loss to her; ‘half a loaf,’ said she, ‘is better than no bread.’

So I derided her for being an old moraliser and I called her ‘Platty,’ as we used to call her when she became too sensible at Ballinacragga. She said

that if she might not platitudinise, and if her conversation failed to please, she wouldn't talk at all. And so to bed.

‘How true it is,’ said Brownie at breakfast this morning, ‘that we seldom value our blessings until we lose them.’

She spoke thus in order to show me that she would talk in platitudes if so disposed.

Having relieved her last night's sense of injury, and asserted her right to do as she pleased, she explained the inner meaning of her remark. She meant that we have been here a long time and have seen very little of what the ordinary tourist sees. This is partly owing to the kindness of our friends, through which we have seen so much that the ordinary tourist does not see.

To-day, therefore, is to be a day of serious sightseeing. It was such a

glorious morning, so clear, so bright. We would go first to the top of the Sheldonian Theatre, whence we might look over Oxford and all the towers thereof.

My silent friend at the luncheon had told me that this was the way to begin to see Oxford.

He uttered so few words, and this made those that he did utter seem particularly worth remembering.

‘When I have visitors,’ he said, ‘I take them up to the top of the theatre and I say, “There is Magdalen and there is Christ Church, there is New College and there the Bodleian Library. Here is half a crown. Go forth and see the sights and trouble me no more until evening.” The man who can’t amuse himself in Oxford must be a fool.’

He said the word fool with such bitter emphasis that I thought how dreadful it

would be to act the double part of his guest and that of a fool. But then, to be sure, was there ever a fool that knew himself for one? So comfortably are things in this world adjusted for the fools.

These meditations ended, we set off for Broad Street, where stands the Sheldonian Theatre. It is fenced about by high iron railings and square stone pillars; each pillar is surmounted by a stony head. We duly visited the theatre itself. We tried to fancy what it might be like when it is full of dons, ladies, and undergraduates all sitting in their proper places to see the men whom Oxford delights to honour taking their honorary degrees.

The seats looked very far from comfortable; they are high narrow benches without backs; no pandering to modern ideas of lolling and luxury about them.

Then on and up we went, past the

undergraduates' gallery, whence come those bursts of unpremeditated wit for which the Encænïa is, or was, famous. I say 'or was,' for it is said that since women were sent to sit among the men in the top gallery a chill has fallen on these periodic outbursts and the current of the undergraduate's wit is frozen within him.

Over the ceiling of the theatre is a spacious room where the University Printing Press once had its home.

Ever onward and upward until we found ourselves inside a cupola with eight sides and each side a window. And then we hardly knew where to turn first, for all the lovely city lay in the glowing sunshine at our feet.

Immediately beneath was the long narrow winding roof of the Bodleian Library; beyond this rose the swelling dome of the Camera Bodleiana; again beyond, the spire of the University Church

with all its clustered pinnacles stood clear against the summer sky.

Faithfully with guide-book and with key-plan did we try to identify each tower and roof. Always beyond them stood the hills ; on the east Headington Hill and Shotover rose behind the tower of New College ; on the west the Berkshire Hills behind the slender *flèche* of Exeter College Chapel and the sturdy square tower of St. Michael's.

Looking northward we saw something of the newness and incongruity of modern Oxford. Much of it is mercifully hidden among bosky trees, but nothing could hide the terrible red and striped walls of Keble.

We saw another too modern and incongruous object. A large new red motor-car was bumming and buzzing its way down Broad Street. We had to turn away and avoid the sight of the blatant thing.

‘See!’ cried Brownie; ‘see, Barbara, these queer bronze ladies who poise and gesticulate on the roof of the Clarendon Building!’

‘Look, then, Brownie!’ I cried. ‘Look, then, at the tower of the Schools and the egregious James the First: he sits under his canopy and watches that angel who blows the trumpet of his fame.’

What fun it would be, we thought, to come up here in Term when these streets and quadrangles spread out below us would be full of dons and undergraduates in their caps and gowns. If we came up here then we should see them running backwards and forwards to lectures, all unconscious of the eyes that watched them from so high a vantage-ground.

Now only the old guide paced up and down, expectant of the coming tourist.

But not for long did he remain the only human interest. We could see that he was

becoming anxious, there was something about his back which seemed to tell us that fishes were about to swim into his net.

‘They come!’ we said to one another.
‘I wonder what they will be like?’

And oh! dear aunt, it was all too soon that I knew who those little fishes of whom I spoke so lightly were.

‘O Brownie!’ I said, ‘and is all my fun to be over? There are the bride and bridegroom. Maive Magrath—you remember the Magraths of Kilrush?—she was married just before I came away to one of the O’Briens of Tulla, they are finishing out their honeymoon in that motor-car from the sight of which we turned instinctively away!’

Oh, wasn’t it hard on me? Where would be the fun of my little adventure if all the world were to know of it! I had intended to possess for ever the memory of my little holiday in peace.

When I get home, to say that I have been in England is all that will require to be said. I did not want to talk it all over—to vulgarise it with questions.

‘Have you been there?’ and ‘Did you see that?’

I was not doing anything wrong, but I would not, if I could help it, be discovered in not doing it.

We saw that the guide had secured them and was leading them rapidly towards the Bodleian. Our descent, at least, was safe.

Waiting at the steps of the theatre was the motor-car, and the driver was Brian O’Daly.

‘Brian,’ I said, ‘you must not be surprised to see me here, and Miss Brown, that you used to know when you were with us at Ballinacragga, Brian, you must not be surprised to see her.’

‘I will not, ma’am,’ said he.

‘And are you here for long, Brian?’

‘For the day only,’ said he.

‘And are they going to see all the sights with that guide?’ said I.

‘They are so,’ said he.

‘Well, Brian,’ said I, ‘I have a very good reason of my own for not wishing to be seen. It is well for me that Mrs. O’Brien, at any rate, is too short-sighted to think of seeing me at all.’

‘And the Captain,’ said Brian, ‘it seems to me that he is wholly intoxicated with the killing shafts of love, and won’t be seeing you either, ma’am.’

This was reassuring, but where should we go next? Oxford is such a little place, and all that one goes to see is so near to everything else, we should probably fall into their arms in spite of any precautions that might suggest themselves to Brian. But I could not deprive Brownie of her morning of sightseeing merely because of

my craven fears. My own instinct would have led me to run back to the sure haven of Hope Cottage. If Brownie went alone it would not be much better, they would meet her and recognise her; they would surely say, 'Have you seen Barbara lately?' and that would lead to circumlocutions and impossible subterfuges.

No! we would go boldly forward and trust to luck.

We would go to New College cloisters again and have time and quiet meet for meditation.

Here we sat for a time wrapped in peace.

Only for a very little time. Too late I remembered that Captain O'Brien's brother had been a New College man, so of course they would be sure to come and see the college. We were caught in a trap. There is but one way to get in and out of the cloisters. It was no use to make a

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FROM NEW COLLEGE TOWER

dash for it. We could hear Maive's pretty soft voice saying, 'Oh! this is beautiful, we will stay and walk all round.'

Just then we saw a door opening in the north wall and a man coming out of it.

'Please,' said we very politely and with one voice,—'Please, kind man, may we come in and see what is there?'

'It is the way up the tower,' said he, 'you can go up if you like, ladies.'

We thanked him profusely. We begged him to shut the door; we said that a great number of tourists were about, and we thought he would not wish to take them all up. He said that we were thoughtful ladies and he certainly would not. He took us up past the bells and out upon the leads. We added yet one more to our series of mental pictures of Oxford. The dangerous cloister lay at our feet; we could see the O'Briens looking out into the cloister garth through the four

doorways that lead into it. We waited until we saw them rejoin the car at the head of New College Lane, and then we descended and hurried away in the opposite direction.

Turning and twisting along New College Lane we came upon a church—St. Peter's-in-the-East.

'Here's a church,' said Brownie. 'Let's go in.'

A noble piece of Norman chancel was our reward. There is a tablet in the church to the memory of Hearne, the Oxford antiquary, and in the churchyard is his grave; he lived and died at St. Edmund Hall, which borders on the churchyard. We peeped into its tiny quadrangle, which is full of a quaint charm.

When we came out we ran into Mr. Bent; he turned and came back with us to Magdalen. If we were ever in Oxford on the morning of the first of May we

should rise out of our beds in the cold grey dawn and come here at five o'clock to hear the choristers greeting the sun from the top of the tall tower, which is one of the chief glories of Oxford.

Mr. Bent says that he has never missed a year since he came up.

He described the wonder of it—the long climb up the tower, the coming out into the morning mists, the burst of song just as the sun rises, the clashing of the glorious Magdalen bells which seem to sway the slender tower. Then caps and gowns are thrown wildly into the air, and helter-skelter rush the choir-boys down the ladders and the stairs. Then off to the meadows to pick the fritillaries, or up Headington Hill to look down on Oxford lying below in the dewy meadows.

Some day we too will come, will we not, to greet the sun on May Day?

Mr. Bent met a friend—a Fellow of

Magdalen. They had business to talk over, so they said they would take us into the college walks by the side of the Cherwell, and let us out at the further end. This arrangement set my mind at rest, for I had not enjoyed great peace in so much visited a spot as Magdalen. At any moment the O'Briens might be upon us. At every corner I feared to see or hear them.

Mr. Bent and his opportune friend did not know that in my memory of this day they will for ever dwell as guardian angels.

Later on we are to go to tea with Mr. Bent in the garden of the Union. Just now I am sitting on our grass patch surrounded by the books which he and Mr. Enderby have lent us.

I am afraid that my head will be in a most terrible muddle, it is so crowded with fresh material.

I am rather glad to leave the historical works, and to turn to the artless journal of Celia Fiennes, who came here at the close of the seventeenth century. Much, of course, is changed since her time. There are now no 'little walks and mazes for the Schollars to divert themselves' in New College. The 'round mount' is there still, but I suspect that the scholars have found some more active source of amusement.

Celia seems to have been most struck by the modern improvements of her day; she did not seek, as we modern travellers do, for any traces of bygone times. She commends a church which is 'very handsome and full of galleries,' and praises Trinity for 'its fine neate chapple, new made, finely painted.'

I wish I had lived in those times when a fair lady could spell as her taste or fancy prompted her. Celia made a brave

dash at Chichele, and decided that Chick-lay was as near as she was likely to get to it.

Brownie deplores all this lending of books, as it confirms me in my evil habit of reading six at once, and indeed I am much torn between biographies of Oxford worthies and of Oxford dogs, and between tales of heads of houses and of college cats. Also I must store my memory with the poems of A. G., so that I may carry an antidote in my head for use in rare moments of depression.

All this does not leave much room in my brain for the storage of historic facts: you must take all those that I present to you with a pinch of salt.

I can only undertake to give an account of Oxford as it strikes an uneducated young woman of the nineteenth century.

I shall copy the bold and generalising style of Celia Fiennes. Listen to her description of the Malvern Hills:—

‘They are at least 2 or 3 miles upp, and in a Piramiddy fashion on ye topp.’

Doesn't that bring them before one's mind's eye much better than pages of elaborate description or exact details of their height and geological formation?

Now Brownie calls me from these meditations and comparisons, and bids me get ready to go to tea at the Union. I must gather myself up out of my barricade of books and off my comfortable rug. Here, too, in this little enclosed garden I felt so safe from the O'Briens, and I shall be safe again in the Union, but what may not befall in the wide world that lies between?

The Union, you must know, is the great University club.

We took our tea under the shade of the lime-trees in the Union garden. We saw the library, on the walls of which the Pre-Raphaelites painted frescoes with

such high hopes ; now it is just possible to think that one can see here a leg and there an arm and here a piece of drapery.

We saw the debating-hall, where many of our greatest statesmen have first set forth their views on things in general.

‘If you were only here in Term,’ said Mr. Bent, ‘you could come into the gallery and listen to a debate.’

We have begged him not to paint the joys of Term any more, we are so excessively pleased with ourselves and with time and place as they are. We do not wish to believe that our pleasure could be any greater. Also, were we here in Term, Mr. Bent owns that he would have no time to dally with us in these shady gardens. He is a ‘Greats tutor,’ and the Summer Term means hard work and plenty of it for such as he.

‘Don’t you,’ we said, ‘fail to shower blessings on your friends when they come

up, as we suppose they do, and expect to be amused whilst you are so busy?’

‘Yes, I must own that I do. You see we suffer still from the old-time conception of a Fellow of a college as a cultivated courtly person with his living assured and nothing to do: the reality has completely changed, but the popular idea of the character will long remain unaltered.’

‘The married man scores heavily,’ said Mr. Enderby, who had just come in through the little green gate in the wall. ‘He has a home to retreat to and a wife to perform all these social duties for him.’

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Bent, ‘that is so.’

Was it fancy only, I wonder, which made me think that his eye turned upon Brownie and kindled behind his spectacles with some pleasant thought? I do wish that you were here, you have such an excellent judgment in these matters. I

have only feminine instinct for a guide. Yet I do begin to wonder whether he is going to spend all the rest of the Vacation here. When we first met him he was going to set off for the Tyrol as soon as he could.

Anyway, I set down the thought here and now, so that I may not seem wanting in intelligence if things should so fall out.

‘Isn’t the Summer Term rather a frivolous time altogether?’ I asked.

‘Indeed it is,’ they both answered; ‘it is a most trying time. Mothers and sisters, cousins and aunts, think that it is an excellent opportunity to come up and see something of Oxford.’

“‘I haven’t had time to write my essay,” say all your men, “my people are up.” Or, “I’m awfully sorry that I had to cut your leccer, my mother came up quite unexpectedly,” says your most familiar pupil.’

“And the Don has a note
From the Man to explain
That the whole of his female relations come up by
the twelve o'clock train,”

quoted Mr. Enderby.

‘What is your leccer?’ said I.

‘Ah!’ said Mr. Bent, and he really almost blushed, ‘there you have me, Miss Burke. Leccer is undergraduate slang for lecture, and I hear it so often that I sometimes quite inadvertently say it myself.’

‘Then does it form part of a kind of language?’ said I, ‘for Mrs. Oglander spoke of a bedder.’

‘You did make a stand, didn’t you,’ said Mr. Enderby, ‘when a man asked you to enter his name for divvers?’

‘What is divvers?’ said we.

We seem to be always asking questions.

‘An examination called Divinity Mod-

erations,' said Mr. Bent; 'but some of the strictest among us call it Divinity Mods., and thus begin to slip down the path that ends in Divvers. But I never have called my daily exercise my ekker or my morning meal my brekker.'

'We ought to examine Miss Brown and Miss Burke in these byways of speech,' said Mr. Enderby. 'If you had a brother, Miss Burke, would you know what he meant if he asked you to send him his footer bags?'

'Indeed I would not,' said I. Perhaps I shall never know, for just then, 'There's Grant!' said Mr. Bent. 'Go and fetch him, Enderby; I am sure that Miss Burke would delight in him.'

So Grant was fetched, and we did delight very greatly in him.

Mr. Bent gave us a rapid biographical sketch of him while he was being secured.

'He is a native of Oxford, a scholar

of Balliol, an excellent Liberal——' We had arrived at this last recommendation when Mr. Enderby came back with him.

To the outward eye he is a little man with red hair and a somewhat defiant manner.

'Is this your first visit to Oxford?' he asked.

This is one of the recognised conversational openings here, and we returned a suitable answer.

He cross-examined us as to what we had seen, and seemed to be only moderately satisfied with our replies.

'I suppose, Bent,' said he, 'that you have shown your friends only the sights of the University? You haven't given them any idea of the wealth of romantic interest that hangs about our ancient city?'

We saw from the glint of Mr. Enderby's

eye that the little gentleman had a hobby, and that he was just beginning to mount it.

‘Always your University,’ he went on, ‘riding rough-shod over us townspeople, taking away our liberties, lording it over us, treating us as though we were indeed only a city of lodging-house keepers with no history of our own.’

‘Well, but, Mr. Grant,’ said Mr. Enderby, ‘you are a gownsman as well as a townsman. Are we not Balliol men and brothers?’

‘Yes, yes,’ said Mr. Grant, ‘and I’m proud of my college too. But I was a townsman before I was a gownsman. Let the young ladies read Green and see what he has to say about it. I’ll be bound, Bent, that you never put that point of view to them. I shouldn’t be surprised to learn that you had told them that King Alfred founded the University. You

philosophers are as ignorant of history as a child in its cradle.'

'Indeed, Grant,' said Mr. Bent, 'you misjudge us, and Miss Brown and Miss Burke have come to the study of Oxford with quite open minds. Haven't they chosen to come in Vacation? That certainly doesn't seem to show that they came only to see the University.'

'Well, I will say for you, Bent,' said this fiery particle, 'that you do recognise the existence of a city, which is more than some of you fellows do, but not enough, not enough by a long way.'

We blushed in silence, and he went on—

'Now, have you shown these ladies the Castle and the Castle mound? have you shown them where stood Rewley Abbey, or even Osney, or where the chapel of St. Bartholomew's Hospital still stands? I dare say you've taught them to look on

the city wall as a mere picturesque adjunct to the gardens of New College and Merton, and to see in our Cathedral only the chapel of Christ Church. Haven't you now?—eh! now, hasn't he, ladies?'

We owned that we had not seen the Castle, nor the Castle mound, nor had we ever heard of Rewley Abbey; of St. Bartholomew's Hospital we were totally ignorant.

There and then our impetuous new friend haled us off to see something of the city.

We followed him to the Castle. He walked first and very fast along the narrow pavements, and we came after at a rather undignified trot. Every now and again he turned and threw a piece of information over his shoulder for one of us to catch. Now a piece for Brownie and now a piece for me. From time to time he stopped and pointed out objects

of interest or the site where such an one used to stand.

‘Here,’ said he, as we paused for a moment beside an arched gateway,— ‘Here stood St. Mary’s College, a house of the Augustine Canons ; here Erasmus stayed with them.’

Then, as we dived suddenly up a small entry paved with stones, ‘Here Sewys Street once ran across into the Corn-market.’

‘Here,’ as we dashed across the road after him,— ‘Here stood New Inn Hall.’ Then he added abruptly, ‘But I am not concerning myself to point out any University remains. I leave it to Mr. Bent to show you those ; but he is like all of them here, too much concerned with the present to care about the past. Here stood the old church of St. Peter-le-Bailey, within the bailey of the Castle.’

It is very clever of me, dear, to re-

member all this, for our friend rushed us along at a breathless pace, talking hard all the time, and I have had no time to look it up since. Mr. Enderby rushed along with us; he said that he came to learn too. A hasty whirl to the right took us up some steps into a steep and narrow lane.

‘Bulwarks Alley,’ cried Mr. Grant. ‘Once this looked down into the Castle moat, where now there is a busy canal wharf; a quiet corner this, ladies, and visited by few. I could wish to end my days here in one of those grey cottages, forgotten by every one, though so near to the midst of everything, dreaming myself back into the days that are gone for ever—living in that Oxford of the past which was my earliest love and will be my last. You can see here, ladies, something of the strong position of the old city, of the steep slope to the water, and you can see

the great mound that was thrown up nearly a thousand years ago to protect the ford against the Danish pirates when they came harrying and burning on their way up the river. I shall have the memories of a thousand years to keep me company when I end my days in Bulwarks Alley.'

Our little gentleman looked away into the distance with eyes full of love for what he saw.

'Don't you fancy that you can hear the sound of the Osney bells?' he said.

We wished that we had his knowledge and could see what he saw with the eyes of memory and imagination. To the uninstructed the view was a rather sordid one; but to him, no doubt, knowing as he did what had been there, it was full of suggestion and charm.

His fancy painted the Castle at our feet and the Abbey in the distance, so that he

saw it all before him and heard the sound of Tom bell ringing in his early home.

This was the longest pause that he permitted us to make. We followed him across one street and down another piece of Bulwarks Alley. This brought us out almost opposite to the door of that house for which I had allowed myself to long on that first wonderful evening. Were it not for the fried-fish shops and the thought of you in conjunction with them I would certainly take it; but you and fried-fish shops, dear, form a combination on the thought of which it is impossible for a sane mind to dwell.

‘Below there,’ said Mr. Grant, with a wave of his arm, ‘was once the garden of the Franciscan monastery; later it was the fashionable resort of all the Oxford toasts and their beaux. To this house,’ and he waved his arm at my chosen abode, ‘Thomas Frognall Dibdin came



THE CASTLE, AND THE CASTLE MILL

a-courting ; you can see a picture of the door in his reminiscences. Every corner has its memories, every yard of the ground its history. Hereabouts was the great Franciscan monastery, here Roger Bacon dwelt with the friars, here he is said to be buried : all trace of church and monastery have disappeared. Cursed,' cried our guide, and his green eyes blazed, 'be they who ruined and destroyed it all ! Come on, ladies, these things won't bear thinking of.' We heard him mutter 'Cursed ! cursed !' as we hurried along after him.

A sharp turn beyond Paradise House brought us in sight of the immensely high wall of the Jail, which stands on part of the site of the Castle, and then we saw the splendid Norman tower of St. George, the only one that remains of the ring of towers which once guarded the Castle. Beneath it is the Castle mill.

Here for a space we were permitted to lean on the parapet, to watch the water running under the bridge, and to relish the perfect composition of the Norman tower, the high mill buildings, and the yellow carts being loaded with flour.

Here Mr. Grant reminded us of the wondrous escape of the Empress Maud when, clad all in white, she fled across the frozen river and the snow-clad hills to Wallingford; away from her foodless stronghold and her besieging cousin Stephen. Round the next corner we came into view of the great earthen mound. We longed to go up it and to see the well-chamber which is on it. Also we wanted to go up the Norman tower and down into the Norman crypt of the ancient church of St. George.

‘These things cannot be done,’ said Mr. Grant, ‘except by very special leave of the powers that be.’

‘Surely,’ said we, ‘the city is then very churlish in comparison with the University, for there is hardly anything that one cannot see in connection with the University and its buildings.’

‘I am sure,’ said I, ‘that the patriotic Oxford citizen must want to go just as much as the tourist does.’

But our guide would have no reflections cast on his beloved city. He muttered something about the Jail and the control of the Home Office and turned the subject.

Next we found ourselves in a street of common lodging-houses; Italian organ-grinders were the principal inhabitants.

‘Not many touring strangers come along here,’ chuckled Mr. Grant; ‘they stay in the genteeler parts of the town, thank the Lord!’

We came next to an ancient church, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Mr. Grant took us into the churchyard and bade us pause beside a grave under the shadow of the tower.

‘Here,’ said he, ‘lies Felicia Skene. Go home and buy her life and read it. It will be better for you than reading all the stupid novels that you do read, I expect.’ (Our friend, you know, was not a polite person.) ‘You won’t wonder when you have read that why I have brought you here to pause for a minute by her grave. It is no small thing to have seen a saint going to and fro in one’s own beloved city. And now to Osney, to all that is left of Osney Abbey.’

We set off again across the railway and down a street of small houses until we came to the tall chimney of the electric station and to some farmlike buildings. Here there was an arched gateway of stone, the remains of a square-headed

window, and fragments of stone mouldings, bases of columns, and pieces of window tracery lying at our feet.

‘All that remains,’ said Mr. Grant, ‘of one of the noblest abbeys of England. What a people we English are to let such strength and beauty pass utterly away. Can one wonder that when Samuel Johnson came and saw these ruins he kept silence for at least half an hour before he said to Warton, “I viewed them with indignation!”?’

Why is it that the English have so little reverence and no imagination?

‘It makes one mad to think of it,’ muttered Mr. Grant. ‘Come away! come away!’

We went round by a mill-stream overhung by weeping willows, and crossed the lock-gates on to the towing-path. Beyond the river one looks away across the meadows to the low Cumnor Hills and

to Wytham. This view must be much as it was when the monks of Osney had their home here and when Tom bell still rang out from Osney Tower.

We went on along the tow-path and saw more of the many winding streams that encircle Oxford. It would be blissful to spend long summer days in exploring them.

We came at length to Folly Bridge, where once stood Friar Bacon's study.

Now just when my hat came into view, as I rose from the level of the tow-path to that of the bridge, I heard the 'toot toot' of a motor. A common sound enough, but a fearsome one to me this day. I think that the brave Brian must have seen and recognised my hat, for there was a distinct warning in his 'toot toot.' The danger to me passed away in the cloud of dust that rose along the road behind that loving pair. I shall never see that car

coming up to our door without a vision of Oxford rising before me.

Before we parted from Mr. Grant he showed us something of the wonders of Oxford underground. We dived in and out of shops, saying, with great politeness, 'Please, may we go into your cellars?' and meeting always with a kindly response. Never, I am sure, could I find these wonderful places again.

We said 'Good-bye' at last on a bastion of the old wall, but how we reached it I scarcely know, we went through such queer ways to it.

'Well, ladies,' said Mr. Grant, 'I hope that you are pleased, and that Oxford city will be more than a name only to you for the future.'

We thanked him many times and departed homewards.

We have spent a long morning in the

punt reading some of our new store of books about Oxford. Terribly little we knew, indeed, about what we have come so far to see ; we couldn't well have known less. The only comfort is that so many people here don't seem to know any more. And now, I feel sure, you will say that to plume oneself because of the greater ignorance of others is indeed the meanest way of self-glorification.

We went to tea this afternoon with our pretty lady of the punt—Mrs. Oglander. Her house is charming : full of quaint twists and unexpected turns, full too, gloriously full of books, and not too tidy for comfort.

Mr. Bent was there and the Professor of Histology. Do you know what Histology is? I do not, and Brownie is equally ill-informed.

There was also a quite lovely American,

with garments that fitted to perfection and hair that was most beautifully done. She had a little straight nose with a blunt end, such as Dana Gibson loves to draw.

The lovely American of fiction who travels around all alone seems to be nearly extinct now ; they all have fathers and mothers or other natural appendages. This one had a quiet and pleasant mother.

The Professor told us that he considered Oxford bearable only in Vacation.

‘In Term,’ he said, ‘there are undergraduates about. I detest undergraduates.’

I think it was on the tip of his tongue to say that it is a time when tiresome females are about too, but he remembered just in time.

His bite is better than his bark had led us to expect. He has offered to show us round Pembroke College, to which he belongs. He was scandalised to hear that

we have not yet visited Johnson's rooms or seen the relics of him at Pembroke. Every one is horrified when they find that we have not seen their own particular sights.

He said that he would also show us University College. That is the college where he was an undergraduate. You doubtless know, dear, that people are not necessarily educated at the college where they hold a fellowship. In this particular case the Chair of Histology carries with it a fellowship at Pembroke. Our Professor also says that he will show us something in University that people don't usually see; he leaves us to imagine what this may be. He gave us much information that was deeply interesting. How lucky we are to have fallen in with all these people! We never could have learnt from guide-books all the little details that the learned denizens of the

place can tell us: all the little details which make up the perfect whole.

The lovely American was as keen as we were to learn all that she could of the ways of the beautiful city.

They were some of the nicest Americans that I have ever seen. They made a little plaint of their own on the score of the insular way which some English people have of regarding them as though they were all alike.

‘Some of you,’ they said, ‘expect us all to say “I guess,” and to talk about our poppas and our mommas as though we were all a kind of doll and you had only to pull a string and produce a flood of “Americanisms.” We really are quite pleased sometimes when any of your countrymen recognise that there is an East and a West in America, or even a North and a South, and when you don’t all of you think that all of us live in Chicago,

where we pack pork and pick up dollars all day long.'

We are inclined to spend the rest of our time here in founding a society for producing in the ladies of Oxford a proper appreciation of their privileges. Its short name would be the S.P.L.O.P.A.P. I do really think that is wanted, and would do most valuable work among the younger wives and the more frivolous daughters: half of those that we have met seem to have but a small conception of the great blessedness of their lot.

'It is surely a terrible thing,' said we, 'to live in the loveliest city in England and to know so little of its buildings and its traditions?'

'True enough,' said Mrs. Oglander, 'but even we in Oxford have our little duties to perform as well as our great privileges to enjoy. We can't be always gadding round seeing sights, however

much we might like to do so. Then when most of our visitors come, and it becomes a duty to show them round, they only want, as a rule, to see Christ Church and Magdalen and the places of which they happen to have heard—if they want to see anything at all—and most of them say “How pretty!” in a dreary, perfunctory sort of way. Then one feels inclined to shake them and to send them home again. One of this kind did actually say to me that she thought Oxford “must be a very pretty place—in the summer!” Some of them, too, are so terribly ill-informed. I took one of mine to New College, and when she saw the portrait of Sydney Smith and was told who it was she said, “Ah, dear! yes. How one remembers that cup of cold water on the battlefield!” Now that was very trying for me, wasn’t it? Of course I ought to have known that she was

at once sentimental and ignorant, and I ought not to have taken her out, but one hopes always for the best. Then, too, there are the people who come and want to see all Oxford in one day. "We have just a few hours to spare, my dear," they write, "so we think we should like to run down and take a peep at Oxford."'

Here she turned to the Americans.

'Some of your countrymen and countrywomen are the worst offenders in this way. You do try to do so much in such a little time, at least some of you do. My husband was at the station yesterday, and he heard some Americans say to their cabman, "Now, my man, we have just one hour to go around in, so show us everything straight away." And then there are calls to be paid,' Mrs. Oglander went on. Blushing a little, she added, 'Not that I pay so many as duty and real civility require that I should do ;

in fact I seldom go out calling unless I think that I am going to die. When I think that death is imminent I make up my accounts, I file my bills, I tidy up my drawers, and pay my long arrears of calls, for I think that so in dying I shall leave a sweet savour behind me. People will forget my faults and will say, "After all she was a good young thing; while she lived she did her duty."'

'But if you don't go to them, I suppose they come to you,' said I.

'Surely, yes,' said she, 'even here there are some whose whole existence seems to turn on the due dropping of cards at the exactly proper time and in the right quantities. Then there is the almost endless dropping in. One wouldn't be without it for the world, but it all takes time. I had a cousin staying with me once from the remoter parts of Scotland, and she said that she seemed never to come in without

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finding a stray young man in the house who said that Mr. Oglander had sent him home to luncheon. Then there are the friends who write and tell you about their friends, or even the friends of their friends who are coming to Oxford. "And I feel sure, dear Kathleen, that you will take them about and show them a little attention." One must, you know, expect to endure the penalties as well as to experience the joys of living in such an attractive spot. Only in the Vacation have we a chance to possess our souls. It is then that one has time to think and to wonder if one has a soul worth possessing, or even if one has a soul at all.'

'But you wouldn't leave Oxford if you could help it?'

'Oh no! anything rather than that. It is far better to be ill and bothered in Oxford than to be well and free from care anywhere else. After all, it is only neces-

It is better to be dissatisfied than a pig satisfied

sary to suppress any natural leanings towards too great amiability. I believe that all good things come to those who know how to be disagreeable at the right time.'

'We, of course, can understand the desire of your friends to come and stay with you.'

'Of course, one must expect that people will be glad to come to such a place as this. To our town friends we are "so delightfully in the country"; to our country friends we are "within such an easy distance from town." And we are,' said she, 'I do really think that we are hospitable by tradition and custom. Do you ever see a book about Oxford from Pepys downwards which is not full of descriptions of breakfasts and dinners and teas?'

'I suppose,' I said, 'that you enjoy yourselves thoroughly when you do go away, even though you are so happy here?'

‘Oh yes!’ said she; ‘or perhaps because we are so jolly here. There is the fun of coming back again and retailing all our adventures, and exchanging notes for future use. Then we meet so many friends in unexpected places. All sorts of old college acquaintances turn up in the most unlikely spots. People who were up with my husband, perhaps, when he was an undergraduate; and there are all the old tales to go over again and to call to mind. A whole holiday has never yet passed without meeting some member of our own college.’

‘Can you always recognise them?’ said I.

‘No,’ said she, ‘indeed we cannot always. Perhaps one has parted with them as little more than boys, and then to meet them again as serious persons, fathers of families perhaps, is very confusing. Even in the case of those who are

still undergraduates, great is the change in their appearance, which is caused by difference of apparel and surroundings, and unpreparedness on our part. How can we be expected to recognise in the beautiful young man, faultlessly attired, who accosts us in Bond Street, the shabby individual who once walked the High Street in a pair of down-at-heel pumps and no hat ?'

'I suppose'—we were at it once again with questions—'that you grow to like them all immensely, don't you ?'

'Oh yes, of course we do; all, or nearly all, though it does get rather confusing at times. It is like standing on the banks of a river of young men. The undergraduate goes on for ever, young and fresh, and we remain somewhat as we were. What a stock of experience we ought to gain! We ought to be very entertaining old people.'

‘How they must love to come back?’

‘Oh! indeed they do. There cannot be anything more delightful for a man than to bring his bride to Oxford to show her off. To introduce her to every one, from the Head of his college and his former tutor to the porter and his scout. Then he can take her to his old lodgings and show his former landlady what a clever fellow he has been to secure so charming a wife. Later still, there comes a time when he too brings a son to enter his name on the books of the old college, perhaps to live in his own old rooms.’

‘I suppose,’ said I, ‘it wouldn’t be possible for us to see some of the men’s rooms in college? We are living in licensed lodgings, so we know what sort of rooms the men have outside college. We should love to see what those inside a college are like.’

‘Now that,’ said Mrs. Oglander, ‘is



BATH COURT, HOLYWELL

one of the sights that I should love to show you myself with my husband's help. We will take you all over the college some day, and you shall see for yourselves what life inside one must be like.'

Are not people immensely good to us?

'To-morrow we are to see Pembroke with our Professor. We shall feel quite like two Hannah Mores gallanting it about with our Dr. Johnson. Only our cicerone is no such lover of the ladies!

Mr. Bent walked back with us and took us through a queer little passage which leads from Holywell into New College Lane. It was full of quaint twists and turns, and it seemed to begin and to end nowhere; I doubt whether we ever again shall find the entrance to it. Mr. Bent said that he took a young woman through it when she was staying up here before her marriage. She has been married and settled here for six years, and she has

never been able to find it again. It led us through all the queer old houses which had lain at our feet when we leant over the battlements of New College Tower. There was a charming peep of the tower in the midst of it, and there was a public-house with this legend over the door, 'Gentlemen's dogs kept here.' You know that no man may keep a dog in college, so that any dog who comes up with his master has to be boarded out. You may remember the lovely story in the *Spectator* of the dog who contracted a friendship for a hen who lived at the house where he boarded! At the end of our lane we stopped for a minute to see all that could be seen from the outside of the little octagonal chapel of the Virgin, which stood just here upon the city wall; an arched doorway and the remains of an Annunciation above it are all that remains of it now.

We came out into Broad Street just as the sun was beginning to set.

‘I wonder,’ said Mr. Bent, ‘whether you have been to the top of the Camera?’

You must know it is the Camera Bodleiana, once the Radcliffe Library, and now used as a reading-room for the Bodleian and a store-room for some of the more modern books ; it has a large dome and a species of terrace at the base of it.

Mr. Bent said that he would go and borrow a cap and gown from a friend at Hertford. A member of the University has to wear his academical dress when he takes his friends into the buildings of the University ; the charge of threepence a head is made at most places for any one who is not so accompanied. Mrs. Oglander told us that she had often thought of taking her husband’s cap and gown upon some sort of dummy : it was so hard upon the poor man always to have to go

and take her friends, and yet she felt that she could not, without loss of her dignity as a semi-University person, pay three-pence like any ordinary tripper.

In accordance with the law of community of goods, which seems to obtain here, Mr. Bent soon reappeared dressed in the cap and gown of his absent friend. We set off up the broad, winding, stone stairs of the library; these brought us in time to a little stony landing furnished with a chair, a filter, and a bust. Why, we wondered, a filter!—But we had asked so many questions, and it seemed likely that we should ask so many more, we judged it better to pass the filter by in silence.

Through swinging doors we came into a large round room. There was a broad gallery, and in the gallery and underneath it were set tables for the readers, furnished with pens and blotting-paper, and with



THE "CAMERA" FROM EXETER COLLEGE

little notices in red and green paper. We went up a narrow, dark, winding stair, which brought us out upon the leads. There, stretched out before us, lay Oxford in all the added beauty of a glorious sunset.

From this point we saw so little that was not beautiful.

The trees of Trinity and St. John's hide all that incongruous suburb of northern Oxford. We looked down upon a world of crumbling stone girdled with bossy trees. Another turn in the wonderful panorama showed us All Souls just beneath our eyes; beyond that, the elaborate Renaissance work of Queen's bristling with stony figures set high upon its roof; again beyond, were the elms of Magdalen Groves, looking thick almost as a forest. Then the green slopes of Headington, set with more elms, led the eye away to Shotover Hill, where the trees were in-

tensely blue against an opalescent sky. Just above Shotover hung a great cumulus cloud, rosy red with the reflection of the setting sun. The whole scheme of colour was so rich and full, it reminded me of the tints in the Morris tapestry that hangs in Exeter Chapel. A little breeze rustled and whispered amongst the leaves of a poplar in the Warden's garden at All Souls; there was but little sound of traffic, and the steps of the few passers-by rang out sharply on the pavement beneath, and their voices ascended clearly to us where we leant over the balustrade. It was difficult to tear ourselves from one point to another. Where all was so beautiful each moment was so precious.

It must have been on such an evening as this that Shelley wandered late on Shotover, unable to turn for home until all the glory had departed.

We looked away to the west to the hill

where the Scholar Gipsy roamed, and whence he looked down upon the festal light in Christ Church Hall. We saw the elm-tree of which Matthew Arnold writes ; it certainly does look exactly like an elm, although, as Murray's Guide coldly remarks, ' It is, as a matter of fact, an oak.'

And we never have been to it yet! We, who read our Thyrsis and our Scholar Gipsy together before we came and resolved to visit and identify each hallowed spot. Brownie was so shocked to find that Mr. Bent had never been up to the tree, and still more that he seemed to think it excuse enough for the omission to say that he was not a golfer. The links, it appears, lie up that very field.

I shall go to-morrow. No more time will I lose.

As we looked down into the Square we saw Mr. Enderby walking through it.

A vigorous shout from Mr. Bent brought his astonished gaze to bear upon us. It was not long before he too had scaled the stairs, and we all rejoiced together in the glory of the sunset.

We were looking down upon Brasenose when he joined us, and he said that he had never before noticed the Virgin and Child who fill a tall niche in the top story of the tower gateway of Brasenose. She was charming as we gazed down upon her holding the Child high upon her left arm and keeping watch over the college.

Had she been spared, we wondered, in the fury of the Reformation, being so high above the world? How one does hate to think of all the beauty that has been wasted and lost because people won't do good in moderation. How much evil is done in an excess of good intention. It is impossible to help mora-

lising in this vein here, because at every turn one reads and hears of all the treasures that were lost and destroyed when the commissioners of Edward the Sixth came down to look for signs of heresy and idolatry.

Perhaps, after all, our Madonna was quite new. Things soon get to look ancient here, the damp climate crumbles the soft stone away so fast.

Just a little time we stayed quite silent trying to think back to the times when the early students first came riding or walking to the city which could give them learning, through the thick forest and the low marsh lands which surrounded it.

Think what it must have meant to the men who came here all through the centuries, what it means now, and what it will mean as long as England lasts.

The clocks began to strike the hour of seven. One after another they struck

like well-bred clocks which see no reason for hurry and fuss in the endeavour to attain an absolute punctuality: the deep low tones of St. Mary's, the lovely Magdalen chimes, the varied voices of all the college clocks, and 'the voice of Tom in his Tower.'

It was hard indeed to tear ourselves away; but we felt that we should ill reward Mr. Bent by depriving the poor man of his dinner; no Mrs. Codlicott has he, we imagine, to keep his platter warm for him. We doubt if we did not stay too long, but who that can help it would leave a sunset to play itself out to the end without an audience?

When we came home we found the politest note from the Professor requesting the pleasure of our company at luncheon, at a quarter past one o'clock, in the common room at Pembroke.

Truly, dear Aunt Camilla, we begin to wonder whether there can be anything especially charming about us, or whether every one here is simply delightful! Do not be alarmed also, dear, for the proprieties—the Professor adds that he has secured the company of Mr. and Mrs. Oglander.

10 o'clock A.M.

It is not very often that I write my letter to you at this hour in the morning, but I feel to-day as though it were already late in the afternoon. Is this, I wonder, always the feeling of those who rise, as I did, at daybreak?

I woke so early full of the feeling that there was something to be done and that I was the person who would have to do it; as I went on waking I remembered my vow of yesterday that I would surely not allow another day to pass without mounting that ridge behind which last

night we saw the sunset flame. I too would seek the track by Childsworth Farm, would pass the wood and attain the Signal Tree.

I got up and looked at my watch. It was half-past three. At half-past four, said the almanac, the sun should rise.

Mr. Bent had said that it is the walk of an hour or so.

‘There is just time,’ said I to myself. ‘Last night I saw the sun set over Oxford; this morning I will see it rise. I will go alone, and all by myself, and I will bring back the dew of the morning to Brownie while she still lies in her bed.’

So I set off through the quiet grey streets of the city; up to Carfax and down St. Aldate’s; over Folly Bridge and along the Abingdon Road.

The romance began when I had crossed the reservoir and entered on the narrow

path which leads to South Hincksey across the water meadows. Were not my feet upon the path which the Scholar Gipsy might himself have trodden when he forsook his friends that summer morn? Anyway, it gave me pleasure to think so.

In Hincksey, an utterly unspoiled village, I stayed long enough for a glass of milk fresh from the cow, but not long enough to satisfy the general curiosity as to the reason of my early walk.

I had not too much time to reach the top of the hill before the sun rose. On I went over a stile and began the ascent of the Happy Valley, brushing the dew from the corn as I trod the narrow path.

It was like a valley in a fairy story, so small and so complete. A brown stream wound at the bottom of it—a tiny and a quiet little stream. On the further

bank was a hanging coppice of oak-trees.

Before long I came in sight of a large farm.

‘This must be Childsworth Farm,’ thought I, and I began to mount the hill with a heart full of joy. I had not once looked back since I started, and when I stood at length under the tree I felt that my reward was great indeed.

Oxford was just lifting her head from under the curtain of white mist in which she had been sleeping: spires and domes were faintly touched by the first gleams of the rising sun.

‘Oh! it is very good for me to be here,’ said I, and I sat down to eat a piece of chocolate, for it is not given to the most romantic of us to live by a view alone.

When that was done I began to sing Pippa’s song, because it was so appropriate, and because I was so happy I



THE PATH BY CHILDSWORTH FARM

must needs sing something. You know well, dear, that my singing is only the outcome of pure joy and for private hearing only, so I stopped abruptly as some one came up the steep slope at my feet with a more springy step than that of the country people who were going slowly forth to work.

It was the step of Mr. Enderby. He said that he very often took a long walk before breakfast. He appeared much astonished to find me here stuck up on the top of the hill. There was chocolate enough to allow me to be hospitable, and in return for food he gave me information; he pointed out the towers and spires as they rose from the bank of mist: they looked wonderfully white in the distance and the clear air, almost like marble palaces and towers. The kind white mist hid all the incongruous red suburbs to the north and east, and all that we

could see was the unencumbered beauty of the lovely city.

‘Where Isis’ waters wind
Along the sweetest shore
That ever felt fair Culture’s hands,
Or Spring’s embroider’d mantle wore,’

quoted Mr. Enderby.

It was a white morning. Wreaths of the white mist curled up and lay along the hill; an old white horse looked over the hedge; two white calves were meditating under the oaks by Childsworth Farm; a white cock stood up and greeted the sun on the mossy roof of the ancient barn.

‘How could the Scholar Gipsy leave it all?’ said I. ‘Perhaps if he had stayed he might have become a Fellow and have lived all his life in that dream city.’

‘I expect he was wise,’ said Mr. Enderby; ‘and perhaps he had a rheumatic tendency. Lovely as Oxford is, she is

not altogether invigorating, you know ; it isn't easy to do one's best work there.'

Then he pointed out several new red houses which dotted the hill behind us, and in which dwell some of those who cannot live down in the valley, and yet are not able to tear themselves right away from Oxford.

'Here, too, is a great aid to health,' and Mr. Enderby showed me that I had walked over the links without noticing them in the exaltation of the coming up.

'Here,' said he, 'come grave professors and hard-worked tutors and gay undergraduates to disport themselves.'

'Only in the afternoon, I suppose,' said I.

'Ladies come and play in the morning, and occasionally a grave professor may be observed or a wholly abandoned undergraduate. The industrious don plays only on occasional afternoons.'

‘Do they really work so dreadfully hard?’ said I.

‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I believe that they do. I used not to think so, but I have more of a fellow-feeling for them since I decided to join their ranks myself if I possibly can.’

‘You are going in for a fellowship, are you not?’ said I.

‘Yes, for a prize fellowship, that will not oblige me to stay up; but I shall try to get tutorial work as well, that will mean staying here and taking my share in the work of some college.’

‘Surely,’ said I, ‘a most delightful life?’

‘Delightful indeed,’ he answered, ‘but not so very easy. It’s not such a very uncommon thing for a man to break down under it, especially at first. Our Terms are very short, and we have to crush a good deal of work into them.

Now and then a man's nerves will go all to pieces, and he spends a year or so in getting them straight again.'

'I think,' said I, 'if I were a millionaire I should build a hermitage up here for you all to retire to when things in Oxford became too much for you. I should build it like a Carthusian monastery, with separate cells for those who wished to meditate alone, and with cloisters and a hall where those might meet who were socially inclined. Up here in the purer, fresher air, and away from troubles and fusses, the worried dons would soon recover, and would go back all fire and vigour to their work. Can't you see it—with its quiet gardens, its quadrangle, and its cloister? There would be frescoes on the walls of the cloister and in the hall.'

'How would you work the chapel?' said he. 'There would have to be a

chapel to complete the likeness to a monastery.'

'Of course there would,' said I. 'There would be services at all the canonical hours, and the music would be of the best.'

'And would there be tired scouts to wait upon the tired dons?' said he. 'Or would there be a lay sisterhood attached?'

But I said that I was not quite sure how the service would be managed. I fear that he was laughing at my plan, which would, I feel sure, work out beautifully. Perhaps some day I shall come back and try it, if I can get the land, but I shall not take in any scoffers.

It seemed almost sweeter going back than it was going up. It was pleasant to have some one to talk to, and to be saved from that rather flat feeling which comes after taking a long walk before breakfast in a state of great exaltation.

Brownie was mightily astonished to hear of my doings, and to receive a bunch of wildflowers in token of the truth of my tale of travel.

‘You had better go and rest now,’ said she, ‘unless you wish to fall most uncivilly asleep at the professor’s luncheon.’

So I have made myself a nest of cushions on the lawn, and I am alternately sleeping and reading Matthew Arnold. Then I ponder on the events of the morning, and then I write this, my diary letter. Forgive me, therefore, if it sounds a little confused.

Now we have come back from Pembroke.

Only we and the Oglanders, Mr. Bent, and an undergraduate were there. The Professor, though opposed to undergraduates in the lump, seems to cherish kindly feelings towards the individual specimen.

This one was evidently asked to play about with me ; we were meant to look upon ourselves as the children of the party, and to behave accordingly. I didn't find it very easy, and I don't think that he did either. Perhaps having a rôle assigned to us made us wish perversely to play other parts.

He told me that he was up for a night only, in order to escort his 'little kiddy sister' home to Scotland from her school, which is near here. I think that he was honestly horrified to find that we have come solely to see Oxford. 'Isn't it awfully dull,' he said, 'with all the men gone down?' It seemed priggish to point out that there are things and even people to see in Oxford when he and his are gone.

'What do people do here in the Vac.?' he wondered. He was evidently quite unused to meditating on the causes of

things, and the more he pondered on our perversity the more puzzled he became.

Later on I was vexed with myself for letting slip this unique opportunity for acquiring some genuine undergraduate slang. But, after all, of what good would it have been to me? You would never have permitted me to use it.

I asked him what he did on Sundays in Term. He replied that he sometimes 'did a Barney.' I did not like to ask him what he meant. I merely said, 'Oh, do you?' I gathered that 'a horrid frowst' is Oxford for a condition of great stuffiness; that I thought was an in-offensive and expressive expression. He was a friend of that Courtney whose rooms we were living in; he spoke of him with deep respect as a very great person indeed.

'He got his "Soccer" Blue in his first

Term,' he said, 'but he's an awfully modest chap ; you might be in the room with him for a long time and never know that he was a Blue at all.'

'Indeed!' said I, with all the awe and astonishment that I could throw into one word.

Except for my failure to entertain this ingenuous youth, I enjoyed myself enormously. There is something so sedate about these college entertainments ; one feels, too, that one is only a character in a play which has held the boards for centuries. At any moment the door might have opened and Dr. Johnson might have rolled into the room ; I should not have been at all surprised to see him. We had luncheon where a portrait of the Great Doctor looked down on us from the walls ; in a corner cupboard was the teapot from which he drank so many cups of tea. How, I wonder, would

he have got on with my young friend? He was so human that he would have found some subject of common interest, I expect, remembering how he himself went sliding in Christ Church meadows when he should have been at work.

We climbed the narrow staircase to his rooms over the gateway tower, and saw the window from which he threw that well-meant pair of shoes.

How one can imagine him hurling his huge bulk down these stairs in pursuit of some intrusive servitor.

Our host was a scholar of University in his undergraduate days, and thither he conducted us when we had taken our fill of Dr. Johnson. We went by Blue Boar Street and up Oriel Street. The Professor said that the sight of the florid horrors of buildings which are accumulating at Carfax depressed him for the rest

of the day, and he never went that way if he could possibly help it.

‘It is surely,’ said he, ‘a singular want of humour which leads Oxford people to sign petitions praying for the retention of the picturesque features of divers foreign cities, while they tolerate such a monstrous building as that which has just been put up in the very centre of the city.’ He muttered something about the town council which I did not completely catch.

At University we forgot our Johnsonian mood, and remembered only that we were in the college where Shelley spent his short academic life. There is a modern memorial to him—Mrs. Oglander’s irreverent comparison of it to a bath set about by a gilded bedstead had many grains of truth in it, though there is pathos in the still white marble figure—only, one does not want to think here of

the Shelley who was cast up by the waves, but of the Shelley who lived his vivid young life to the utmost, who sailed his paper boats and alarmed Mr. Hogg by his medical experiments.

We wouldn't go up to see his old rooms, now part of the junior common room; we thought we would rather imagine them as they were when Shelley lay curled up on a rug before the fire.

The Professor turned to Mrs. Oglander.

'Now I will show you something,' said he, 'that will take you back to the eighteenth century; something I feel sure that even you, my dear lady, have never seen.'

All agog we followed him up the stairs into a suite of rooms smothered in dust-sheets and all forlorn. There were double windows in the bedroom to keep out the rattle of the High Street; opening the inside ones the Professor pointed

triumphantly to these lines scrawled on the glass :

‘Charming Pen Stonehouse,
 Loveliest of Women, Heaven is in thy Soul,
 Beauty and Virtue shine for ever round you,
 Brightening each other ; thou art all Divine.’

Under that was written the name ‘Nanny Brigantine.’

‘Toasts,’ said the Professor in a sharp staccato voice behind us. He had an odd little way of snorting, which gave great point to all that he said.

He went into the sitting-room and came back with a fat white volume.

‘This,’ said he, ‘is Christopher Wordsworth’s *University Life in the Eighteenth Century*. It is a mine of useful references.’

He showed us the account of a High Tory club called ‘The High Borlace,’ which flourished at Oxford in the middle of the eighteenth century. It used to give balls for which the members chose a Lady

Patroness. In 1732 she was a Miss Stonehouse—so this was our Pen,—Love-liest of women!

‘That’s very interesting,’ said I, ‘but who, then, was Nanny Brigantine?’

‘Ah, ha!’ said the Professor, ‘you must ask the ghost of that young man who lived in this room in those days.’

Now, isn’t this a queer little page of bygone romance? Doesn’t it bring the swirl of hooped petticoats back to your ears?

I couldn’t attend to the hall and the chapel as I ought to have done, my head was so full of speculations about Pen and Nanny. I should like to stay here and to give myself up to researches into their history. Somewhere in the college books there must be a record of the past inhabitants of these rooms.

I wonder if they painted up their names then as they do now. There is a large

black patch at the foot of every staircase, and, in white letters, the names of those who live up it. 'Mr.' precedes the name of a don, and the undergraduate is plain 'Smith' or 'Jones.' For the first time, too, we saw an 'oak,' such a contrivance as once delighted the heart of Shelley.

At the gate the Professor bade us a stately adieu and went off for his usual walk round the parks. My young friend had long since faded away, fatigued by the persistence of our sightseeing and disgusted with an Oxford empty of Blues. Mr. Oglander had gone back to work.

'What are you going to do with the rest of this lovely day?' said Mr. Bent.

'We really don't know,' said we. 'We seem to have filled it so full already.'

I had made Brownie promise not to tell them about my excursion of the early morning.

Then said Mr. Bent, 'Have you been

on the Upper River?' When he heard that we had not, he said it was imperative that we should go.

'We will have supper at Godstow and come back by moonlight,' said he.

We dispersed in different directions—Mrs. Oglander to try and persuade her husband to come, Mr. Bent to find Mr. Enderby and to order the boat. We were all to meet at Bossom's on the Upper River.

It was so gay at Bossom's. All the boats rocked and danced on the sunlit water which plashed and gurgled invitingly against the side of the raft. Mrs. Oglander and Brownie minded the steering; I was glad to lie quiet in the bows. Mr. Bent stroked and Mr. Enderby pulled in time.

Away across the fields on our left we passed Binsey, the little village to which Frideswide fled and where her well is to

this day. Up to the lock at Godstow the river is broad and fairly straight, running along by the side of Port Meadow, a great open space which has belonged to the citizens of Oxford for ever and ever. At Godstow we came to the little that remains of the nunnery where Fair Rosamund lived in penitence and died. Hereabouts the woods come closer to the river and the stream gets narrower and twists and turns.

‘A little further on,’ said Mr. Bent, ‘and you shall hear the nightingales singing in the woods at Wytham.’

I thought that this seemed hardly likely, as I have never met a nightingale that sang to me in August. I did not, however, like to contradict. I suppose that learned persons have no time to verify such details. A long way they rowed us past fields of corn and meadows full of flowers and lush grass; here and there

a fisherman sat upon the bank or a pair of lovers walked along the tow-path. We had our impromptu supper on the bank, and Mr. Bent prevailed upon Brownie to go with him to listen for those nightingales.

‘I am sure,’ said he, ‘that I heard them beautifully when I came here last.’

‘Very likely,’ said Mr. Enderby to me. ‘I was here with him, and it was early June.’

But Brownie looked quite content when she came back, and so did Mr. Bent.

We slipped home through the lovely quiet night. The river was all silver and black and mysterious ; the moon rose into a sky left warm and palpitating by the sunset. We are back in our little garden, which is lying at my feet transfigured and dignified by the shadows and

the moonlight. The poodle dog has it in his mind to bay at the moon. The Persian puss is playing mysteriously in and out of the bushes. Brownie is getting absent-minded, and is only fit to be shaken up and taken off to bed.

This whole day we have given up to loitering in the shade. We set out across the road filled with the very best intentions and intent upon really seeing the Dodo, but a little white ticket on the gate of the museum told us that the building is closed until the end of August. Long before that we shall have gone. Brownie must return to her Aunt Priscilla with a tale of the Dodo unvisited.

Then we went to the Ashmolean to see Alfred's Jewel, but the museum does not open until eleven o'clock, and it was then only just ten.

It was a baking day. The sun flared

and burned, searching out every corner ; it was not a time to sentimentalise and to revive the past ; mists and shadows and tender half-lights are needed to do that effectively.

‘ Brownie,’ said I, ‘ it is not a day for intelligent sightseeing. Let us give it up to gardens. Let us crawl as much in the shade as we may from one garden to another ; let us make garden books of ourselves, and quote poetry to each other under the whispering trees. There is a cool side to Beaumont Street, let us then walk along it. I feel it in my bones that there is shade in Worcester.’

‘ Why not try St. John’s ? ’

‘ Because Mr. Bent said that he had a friend there who would let us in by moonlight. Let us wait for the more romantic way of seeing it.’

Thus I reasoned and prevailed.

Hot as we were it gave us pleasure to

see an enthusiastic tourist, Baedeker in hand, enthusing on the wrong spot. She was gazing in a rapt manner at the base of the electric light standard in St. Giles. She was evidently feeling all the emotions that should properly belong to the stone which marks the place in Broad Street where Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley laid down their lives. We are such old inhabitants now that such mistakes are not possible for us ; we are able and glad to return the right answer when tourists ask us in the quadrangle of the Bodleian, ' Please, is this a college ? '

We wandered into the garden of Worcester, passing the quaint old houses to which the Benedictine monks used to come when what is now Worcester College was Gloucester Hall.

The garden was a very heaven of coolness and silence. We wandered round by the pond, beyond which one sees the

canal and the river ; we looked across these to the fragment that remains of what was once the noble Abbey of Rewley. We talked of Osney and of Rewley, of Dr. Johnson and of Lovelace, and of all the new interests that our visit to Oxford has opened up to us, we spoke of the books that we must read and write to each other about, we discussed the details of a scheme for spending our old age in a little cottage on Headington or Boars Hill, with a fat pony to draw us up and down the hill to Oxford.

I'm afraid, dear, that I have no more elevated conversation to report to you. Brownie remarked quite three times, 'I feel that it is good for us to be here.' She did not seem to want me to agree or to disagree with her, so I sat silent and wished for nothing in the world, unless it were a little bread to feed the swans.

In the afternoon we drifted down to the

punt, laden with books and with tea-things. This time we went down the stream and landed at the Botanical Gardens; I wanted to see whether they were much changed since my Celia Fiennes came here in 1695. The Physick Garden afforded her great diversion and pleasure. 'The variety of flowers and plants would have entertained one a week,' says she. There is always a compact between Brownie and me that we shall neither read aloud our favourite extracts nor quote them to one another; I don't know of any habit so exasperating or so likely to cause a lasting breach between loving friends.

Generally we held honestly to this compact, but to-day we were demoralised by the excessive heat, and Brownie bore with me meekly while I read her bits from my beloved Celia's diary.

'The Sensible Plant,' said I, 'I can understand. "Take but a leaf between



IN THE BOTANIC GARDEN

finger and thumb," says Celia, "and squeeze it and it immediately Curles up together as if pained." That, no doubt, is the Sensitive Plant ; perhaps Shelley studied its ways here too.'

' Perhaps,' said Brownie.

' But what of the Humble Plant,' said I, "that grows on a long slender stalke and do but strike it, it falls flat on ye ground stalke and all, and after some tyme revives again and stands up"?

' Brownie ! Brownie !' I cried, ' do wake up and say if you think that we are likely to find the Humble Plant here still !'

But Brownie was hopelessly torpid. I had to let her sleep while I drew up under the hanging branches and made the tea.

When we did get into the gardens we found them charming, very quiet and dignified and restful, surrounded by grey walls, and beyond these the green meadows of Christ Church, and glimpses

of our dear river winding its way down to join the Isis.

We were too late to see the green-houses. For this I reproached Brownie, because she had slept away the precious hours ; she retorted with much truth that I should have found out that they shut at four o'clock had I read the useful modern guide instead of the impressions of Celia Fiennes two hundred years ago.

‘ But surely, Brownie,’ said I, ‘ most of the pleasure of these things is that of picturing what they were like in a by-gone day ? Don’t you hear the rustle of hooped petticoats and the click of fans as they must have rustled and clicked in these gardens when the elegant ladies of the eighteenth century came here to take the air ? ’

‘ Not at all,’ said Brownie, who loves to pose as a sensible, hard-headed woman. ‘ I am much more interested in these fine

fat babies who are taking the air at the present day. Have you noticed, Barbara, that the Oxford baby is a very fine specimen of his kind? I should like to gather statistics on the subject of the children of learned men, and to see how great a proportion of them are learned in their turn.'

'That young don who was at Mr. Bent's luncheon told me that at his college they chose their dons for their health and not for their learning,' said I; 'he said that they couldn't afford to have weakly ones who would be always getting ill. I expect that these babies will grow up to be all body and no mind.'

'We will ask the nurse whose child this is,' said Brownie. 'I will enter his name in my notebook and follow his future career with interest.'

He turned out to be the son of the Professor of Tartar Dialects. The nurse told us his style and title with some pride.

‘He’s rather dull,’ she said, ‘nearly all his little friends are gone to the sea. The Professor’s writing a book and he can’t get away just yet.’

The stout person of four looked at us with a somewhat bored expression.

‘Put him in your notebook, Brownie,’ I said, ‘and follow his career. He doesn’t look like an immature Byron or a budding Shelley.’

‘He will probably be an eminent man of science,’ said Brownie.

There was nothing possible to be disputed in this; twenty years hence the question may be settled.

As Brownie would not ponder on the past and I refused to speculate on the future, we compromised on the present and studied the guide-book for hints as to what we should do next.

It occurred to us that the air would be fresher on the hills, and Brownie had not

yet seen Oxford from any of the surrounding heights. We decided to go up a hill. It is a course which the guide-book recommends and it is obviously a sensible one to pursue.

We tied up our punt to a tree by the King's Mill, where once corn was ground for King Charles, and we set our feet on the way up Headington Hill.

On the top of this hill too there are the houses of those who cannot dwell in the plain. It would not have seemed unnatural had the way been strewn with pillars of salt. We rested for a while on a seat at the foot of the remains of a great tree. 'Joe Pullen's Tree it is called,' said an old man who rested there with us, but he could tell us nothing of Joe Pullen. We walked on (at the recommendation of our aged friend) to the village of Headington. Here, our guide-book told us, there was once a palace of King

Ethelred. Of that we saw nothing, for the most sufficing of reasons, but we saw a charming old church and a churchyard cross, and the village itself is worth the trouble of walking out to see.

Then back in the sunset. We leaned over a gate at the top of the hill and saw the mists of evening gathering up once more about the city. Once more we watched the sunset flame behind the ridge of the signal-elm.

Sunday, August.

To-day has been one long golden dream.

I cannot think that I shall ever be quite so happy again.

Mr. Bent made the suggestion, and it was a very bright one. We embarked on the *Pons Asinorum* for the whole day. We were five: Mr. Bent, Mr. Enderby, Brownie and I, and the godmother of

Mr. Bent. She is such a delightful person, old and wise and kind; she and her husband (their name is Charlett) have just come back from their summer jaunt. I cannot think that she thought altogether well of our expedition. It must have been a more natural thing for her to find herself in church on Sunday morning, possibly again in the afternoon; evidently she adored her godson and had sacrificed her wishes to his entreaties. We ourselves went early to church, or, as Mr. Enderby expressed it, we 'put in a chapel.'

There is not much to chronicle. It was one of those days which seem so long and so full, as if one lived a whole life in a few hours.

There were but few people on the river. We had in perfection that glorious feeling of being on an exploring party as we pushed our way through the water-lilies.

When we came into the upper reaches

the Sabbath stillness was all our own. At Water Eaton we could go no further. We got out and walked along the bank to see the old Jacobean manor-house, grey and stately, and the picture of all that a dwelling-house should be. I was seized, of course, with a passionate longing to live in it. It looks across towards the hanging woods of Wood Eaton.

‘You should ride or walk there and come back by Ellsfield,’ said Mr. Bent. ‘You are a Johnsonian, Miss Burke; you will remember how Johnson and Warton walked to Ellsfield to see Mr. Wise.’

‘You call these villages ideal,’ said Mr. Enderby; ‘you haven’t canvassed them as I have, or tried to hold meetings which are broken up by the mere glance of the squire.’

Young Oxford is by no means as conservative as we had expected to find it. There is a strong radical flavour about these friends of ours.

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Mrs. Charlett said something which sounded like 'Fiddlesticks!' and we talked of other things than politics.

Mrs. Oglander came to supper with us ; her husband was dining 'in hall.' Then Mr. Bent came for us and took us to the back gate of St. John's, where his friend was waiting to let us in. It was a delight to enter the enchanted moonlit garden through the little door in the dark wall.

There is a great stretch of lawn which shone in the moonlight like greenish silver, the wonderful garden front was half in shadow, the moonbeams just catching the edges of the oriel windows of the library.

'If we went into the library now,' said Mrs. Oglander, 'we should surely see King Charles walking up and down with Archbishop Laud. I know one of your men,' said she to our kind guide, 'who had rooms underneath the library, and he

told me that he heard their footsteps every night.'

'I think,' said I, 'that I shouldn't be frightened of such well-bred ghosts; one can't imagine either of them doing anything likely to alarm a lady.'

'We will go and look for them,' said Mr. Fletcher—this was our guide—who was as courtly as a don of so loyal a college should be.

So we followed him up a worn, winding, stone staircase. He unlocked a heavy iron-studded door, and we found ourselves in the long dim library. We wandered along it in the moonlight and gave the ghosts every chance to appear. As they did not come Mr. Fletcher turned on the electric light, and by its unromantic rays we saw the treasures of the library.

When we came to the end we ceased to wonder that Laud should come back and re-visit it. Does it not contain his

skull-cap, the one in which he walked to the scaffold? his stick and the diaries that he wrote when he was in prison?

‘I think,’ said I, ‘that I should leave one of these diaries out of its glass case one night. I would put pen and ink beside it, and surely in the morning there would be something written. No ghost could resist such a temptation, especially if you could get an ink-pot and a pen of the period.’

‘There is no evidence, is there,’ said Mr. Enderby, ‘that he has ever tried to get at his stick or his skull-cap?’

‘You couldn’t expect an archbishop to behave as would the ghost of a house-breaker,’ said I. ‘I should leave the things out some night just for them to handle.’

Did you know that Laud was brought back and buried in St. John’s? Mr. Fletcher told us how the Fellows went

forth along the London Road to meet his body ; how they brought it back in the dark night to the garden gate of the college and buried it under the altar in the chapel. We gazed out into the moonlit garden and wondered whether we could not see the ghostly procession carrying their torches and coming towards the college under the deep shadow of the trees.

But we saw only the glimmering moonlight and the shadowy garden.

We went into the chapel. There was a little stony urn which contains the heart of Dr. Rawlinson with the inscription ' Ubi Thesaurus Ibi Cor '—I wonder if they would let my heart have so sweet a resting-place if they had my treasure too ?

We saw the common room—one of the oldest in Oxford. It is kept sacred to its original use, no flippant female can come to luncheon here. There are

two other and less ancient rooms: one in which women may be entertained, and one for smokers.

Mr. Fletcher quoted to us the words of Vicesimus Knox in praise of the old common room: 'Delightful retreat,' writes Vicesimus, 'where never woman showed her head since the death of the founder.'

But this was in 1782. Mr. Fletcher, being a very polite person, made pretty speeches on the ubiquity of woman in the present day. But his eye roamed lovingly round the comfortable room, kept sacred so far from intrusive wives, or even housemaids. 'Long may it be sacred!' said his eye. And who shall blame him?

We went once more into the wonderful garden, where we sat upon a little hillock under a spreading cedar. 'Surely, my dears,' you would have said, 'a most unwise proceeding.'

There were small far-off sounds of the city, and of trains and trams, but only just enough to be a background to the immediate silence.

It has come to an end now, and we are back in Hope Cottage.

I am writing up my diary, and Brownie has gone off to read something that Mr. Bent gave her as we parted at our gate. She did not tell me what it was.

THIRD WEEK

St. Giles's street is fair and wide,
St. Giles's street is long ;
But long or wide, may naught abide
Therein of guile or wrong ;
For through St. Giles's, to and fro
The mild ecclesiastics go
From prime to evensong.
It were a fearsome task, perdie !
To sin in such good company.

Q.

In the 'Oxford Magazine.

200 ST. GILES'

Monday

EVENTS have moved very rapidly with us since last I wrote my diary letter.

When I came down to breakfast this morning Brownie was not there.

Generally that one who is up first knocks reproachfully at her friend's door.

'I suppose,' said I to myself, 'that she too has gone to greet the sun alone upon Boar's Hill. Emulous Brownie!

So I sat on our low window-sill, with my eye on the gate in the wall, ready to greet her when she should come in.

But when the gate did open, and Brownie came through it, I saw at once that something had happened.

‘Brownie,’ I said, ‘what have you been up to?’

‘O Barbara!’ she said, and again, ‘Dear Barbara!’ and kissed me. Then of course I understood. It is not our way to kiss except to mark some really important occasion.

‘O Brownie!’ said I, ‘when did he find time to speak? He didn’t ask you to come out before breakfast on purpose to be proposed to, did he?’

‘No,’ said Brownie, with something that was almost like a giggle. ‘He lent me a book last night,’ said she, ‘with a passage marked in it, and he asked me to meet him this morning if I had any remarks to make on it. Here is the passage,’ said she, and she gave me a prose version of the *Odyssey*.

This is what I read :—

‘And may the Gods grant thee all thy

WADHANI COLLEGE—THE GARDEN



heart's desire : a husband and a home, and a mind at one with his may they give—a good gift, for there is nothing mightier and nobler than when man and wife are of one heart and mind in a house, a grief to their foes and to their friends great joy, but their own hearts know it best.'

'And where did you say that you commented on this passage?' said I.

'In Wadham Garden,' said she. 'It's a perfectly lovely garden, far more lovely than any we have been in yet.'

'Oh, no doubt,' said I.

Then we had breakfast, for meals interrupt the most romantic passages.

Afterwards I tried to digest at my leisure this wonderful news of Brownie's. It's the first engagement that I have ever seen happen under my very nose; I find it deeply interesting and full of phenomena that are well worthy of my study

and reflection. Brownie, usually so matter-of-fact, is dreamy-eyed; usually so pale, she now has a lovely colour. I wonder if Mr. Bent will be at all changed.

We talked of this one absorbing subject in all its bearings. It is, certainly, a surprising outcome of our guileless little jaunt.

‘This will not be your last visit to Oxford, Barbara,’ said Brownie. ‘What fun we shall have when you come to stay with Anthony and me.’

‘Brownie,’ said I, ‘did you tell him what your Christian name is?’

‘I did,’ said she.

‘And he loves you in spite of it?’

‘He does.’

‘Then his will be an enduring love,’ said I.

You know, dearest, that Brownie’s Christian name is the greatest thorn in

her side. It's so ugly, and so meaningless, and so absurdly unsuitable.

Later came Mr. Bent to see what I thought about it all. My thoughts and congratulations were soon expressed, and then they went off, at my entreaty, to study the topography of the *Scholar Gipsy*. As for me, I sat down to meditate and to exchange my views on the situation for those of the Persian puss.

'Hobbes,' said I, 'if you were my Aunt Camilla, what would you say to the events of this morning?'

But the cat was no help at all. She was true to her cat character and to her sex, though her honoured name was Hobbes and she dwelt with philosophers. She made not the smallest attempt to personate you; she only winked hard as she sat up and washed over her left ear.

Mrs. Codlicott was more rewarding. I think that she must have twigged,—forgive the slang!

She came in person to clear away the breakfast things: she has never done so before. 'Well, to be sure, miss,' she said, 'you don't say so! Well, to be sure. So it wasn't for nothing that Hobbes washed over her left ear so persistent this morning. There she is a-doing of it now—bless me!—the sense of the cat. How could she know, now?'

'Does she ever go to Wadham Garden?' said I.

'Oh dear, yes, miss, she does. Mr. Enderby he says he have often a-seen her there. After the birds, she is.'

'Keep it to yourself, Hobbes,' I said; 'keep it to yourself. Don't go confiding in any of your common friends. Miss Brown doesn't want all the cats in the

Parks to know what took place in Wadham Garden this morning.'

'Did you guess that this was going to happen?' I asked Mrs. Codlicott.

'Well, miss,' she said, 'I did. I couldn't help noticing that Miss Brown inclined to wear her best clothes every day, and that's a sign, you know, miss, and a very nice gentleman too, miss, for my sister's husband is a servant at Oriel College, and he always gives Mr. Bent a very good character, affable and considerate; he says he is not always sticking in college all the Vacation as some of 'em does keeping the kitchen and the common room open, and giving no end of trouble to everybody about the place.'

'A hero to his scout,' I murmured to myself; 'happy, happy Brownie.'

'Aw, my dear life, miss,' was the comment of the little Zilpah, 'my young man he will be astonished; he's in the

lodge at Oriel College, miss, and Mr. Bent he tipped him a Christmas-box, and he told him as how they were very well satisfied with him, so he did, miss.'

'You are young to have a young man, aren't you, Zilpah?' said I.

'I be turned seventeen, and I must have some one to love, miss,' said the little Zilpah.

Then Mr. Enderby came out upon his lawn, and I asked him whether he had felt anything unusual in the air this morning.

'He's the very best fellow in the world,' he said; 'I hope they'll be immensely happy.'

He stayed and talked for a little while. He is an understanding person, and I think he saw that I had been thrown into much commotion of the spirit by this great happening.

He told me of the happy life that people

can lead here if they know how to lead it and have the wit to enjoy it to the full. He spoke, too, a little of his own plans and ambitions, his hopes of a fellowship and of settling down to tutorial work here. I think that he would have liked me to talk about my plans for the future. Wouldn't I like to come up to Somerville?

'Oh yes, I would,' said I; but I didn't think it could be managed; I didn't think that my aunt would like it—I made a great Jorkins of you—you dear thing—I think he somehow formed the impression that I am totally dependent on you for a livelihood. I never gave him that impression, but I was glad when I saw that he had formed it. 'Let me,' I said to that Providence which has been so good to me, 'let me be just "Miss Brown's young friend" for a little while longer yet. I have been so happy in that character.'

Things happened afterwards which were still more wonderful.

Mrs. Charlett came to call upon us early in the afternoon. She congratulated them both very heartily and kindly ; she insisted upon it, that we must come forthwith and stay with her and Dr. Charlett. She said that it would never do for Brownie to be here as an engaged woman with only me to chaperone her.

We did protest a little while we thanked her for her great kindness. We have been so happy all alone here, but we gave in at last. There was such a note of absolute finality in Mrs. Charlett's tones when she said, 'It would not, my dears, be at all the proper thing.'

'But what will Mrs. Codlicott say?' said we.

'Emma Codlicott was my maid twenty years ago ; she was with me for ten years ; she knows what is right and fitting,' said

Mrs. Charlett. 'I shall expect you in time for tea. Dinner is at half-past seven o'clock punctually, and Anthony may come as often as he likes.'

Then the kind old lady moved majestically away. So that, dear, is why I am sitting in a big bow window looking out upon St. Giles' instead of into our tiny garden.

Our rooms open one into the other, and we can sit and talk in the lovely moonlight. I have begged Brownie not to tell even Mr. Bent about you and me and Ballinacragga just yet. Later they will come and stay with us, but for a time I may still be 'Miss Brown's young friend.' It is so sweet here and every one is so kind, but there is something that one misses. It isn't quite the same as our little cottage lawn and the surroundings that had grown so familiar and so dear. There we were only spectators of every-

thing in our quiet backwater, irresponsible tourists. Here we are in the midst of everything, going down with the stream, and Brownie is so soon to become a part of it all.

‘You will be a little fly on the great wheel of the education of the nation, Brownie,’ I said. ‘Aren’t you truly thankful that Providence put it into our minds to come here, and more especially that it brought us in Vacation? I am sure that Mr. Bent would never have had time to fall in love with you in Term time, however much he might have liked to do so. He would have been all preoccupied, as Mr. Oglander is. Now he thinks that all your remarks are so much gold and to be treasured accordingly, then he would have looked right through you and would only have said “humph” or “ha” in answer to your most well-intentioned observations.’

I fear that this wisdom fell unheeded on Brownie's ear, for her eyes kept looking out along St. Giles', which lay all silver in the moonlight. I think, you know, that Mr. Bent was wandering up and down under the elms waiting until the light should go out in his lady's window.

So I have come away into my little chamber. It is so chintzy and flowery papered, and the bed is a four-poster, and there are sentimental engravings on the walls. It is of the date when Dr. and Mrs. Charlett were a young couple starting in life.

Our host is a dear, at once dignified and sprightly. The sight of Mr. Bent and Brownie led him to tell us tales of his own Oxford courting fifty years ago. She was the daughter of the Head of a House, he a humble undergraduate of another college. She dwelt on one side of the street, he on the other: from his

window he saw and loved her. It was not so easy to meet then ; there were no married dons, no 'parks,' no tennis, but love managed to find out a way to an introduction, and he came a-wooing. He gained a fellowship ; then he took orders and a college living. Now they have come back to live in a stately manner in the old city.

'We felt that we couldn't be so happy anywhere else as in Oxford,' they told us, 'and some of the old friends are left here still.'

He is a mine of delightful information. I have been sitting on the floor in ecstasy before his collection of books and pamphlets about Oxford. He has all sorts of out-of-the-way bits of knowledge and information, at least they seem so to me—I dare say that they are matters of common knowledge and trite enough to the better instructed.

‘I should like,’ said I, ‘to read all that has ever been written about Oxford.’

This made him laugh immoderately, and he says that he will show me the three folio volumes of the Bodleian catalogue, which are full of matter relating to Oxford.

‘I think,’ said he, ‘that a close acquaintance with all that is known about Oxford in one century alone is as much as you can expect to accomplish by the time that you reach my age, Miss Barbara, and then only if you give all your life to research.’

Then I became more modest, and I said that I would like most particularly to read about the visits that other people have paid to Oxford and to note the effect that its glories have had upon great minds and little ones. Even in this small department of the subject there is quite a literature. I have brought up to bed with

me a book published in 1821, '*The University and City of Oxford*, displayed in a series of seventy-two views, drawn and engraved by J. and H. S. Storer, accompanied by a Dialogue after the manner of Castiglione. By R. Rowley Lascelles, Esqre.'

It is so funny and deeply interesting. The party consisted of a Lady Gertrude, her son and daughter, her foreign friend and her English cicerone. At proper intervals they all make appropriate remarks, calculated to develop and sustain the interest of the reader. Like my dear Celia Fiennes in a former century, they all express their likes and dislikes very freely, calling spades simply spades and describing any architecture that fails to please them as 'a barbaric hotch-pot.' They share Celia's taste for the neat and regular. What really seems to have interested them was to know the height and depth and

length of the various buildings that they viewed. They seem always to have gone sightseeing with a measuring-tape in the pocket of one of them.

Lady Gertrude held quite advanced views. 'I cannot but think,' said she, 'that it was a great oversight at the Reformation that there were no colleges established for women upon the breaking up of so many nunneries.'

They saw, of course, much that no one will ever see again. 'In the north-west corner of the city they pondered over the remains of Beaumont Palace, and saw all that was left of the room which was said to be the very one in which Richard Cœur-de-Lion was born.'

Of course, as becomes the characters in a book, they see all that they ought to see, and do not frivol away great pieces of their time as we have done. We have drunk in great draughts of Oxford and

we are well content, but how little we have done compared to all that we have left undone! Aided by Dr. Charlett I hope for some intelligent sightseeing during these next few days. Brownie is lost for all practical purposes. I do believe that Mr. Bent only simulated an interest in Oxford in order to have an excuse for seeing more of Brownie; he has dropped all pretence to antiquarian tastes, and he and she talk philosophy or something of that sort all the day long.

To-morrow afternoon we are to go to Nuneham, down the river, calling at Iffley on the way. On Wednesday there is to be a little dinner-party to meet Brownie. On Thursday we must leave, Brownie to go and tell her great-aunt about her engagement, and later to stay with Mr. Bent's mother, I to Ballinacragga to await your return.

Glad I shall be to see you and to

fill in the chinks of this true but sadly insufficient narrative.

Fired and stimulated by my overnight reading of the doings of the Lady Gertrude, I resolved that to-day should not pass without some solid addition to my store of Oxford memories. Hitherto I had pursued too much the rather haphazard methods of my dear Celia Fiennes. Now, at the last minute, I will set out armed with information, and will try rather to copy the methodical ways of Lady Gertrude and her party. But then, after all, Lady Gertrude is a figment of the author's imagination ; she and the others were really only pegs to hang remarks upon, and to serve to string the pictures together. Celia was a real live woman like me, at least I suppose that she was. . . . I think that I really and truly prefer her way.

Dr. Charlett put me through an exhaustive catechism as to what I had seen and what I had omitted to see.

‘Not seen Merton Library! My dear young lady,’ said he, ‘you horrify me.’

So to Merton we went first. Silly, indeed, it was of us not to have seen it.

It is beyond expression beautiful. It is the oldest library in England. It is full of a rich aroma of the book-learning of generations: so quiet and dignified and peaceful.

Some of the books are still chained in their original places, giving one a curious sense of the abidingness of the things that matter.

From the library we passed into the chapel: here there are magnificent brasses and some thirteenth-century glass. Here is the tomb of Sir Thomas Bodley, and here lies Anthony Wood, who gave all his



THE FELLOWS' GARDEN, MERTON COLLEGE

heart to Oxford and gained the hearts of all her lovers. He lived just across the narrow Merton Street outside the college. We went into the garden: it is a Fellows' garden, and I couldn't have gone there alone. It lies in an angle of the city wall, within there is a raised terrace walk whence one can look out over Christ Church meadows. Here walked Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies when the court was at Oxford, and strangely unacademic were the doings of the court ladies and gentlemen. It must have been still stranger when the court of Charles the Second fled here to escape the plague, and the queen and her ladies were lodged in Merton.

My dear old gentleman told me all these things as we sat on a stony seat and looked down on the lovely garden or away across the meadows to the river. A dignified collie dog came and talked to

us; I could have told from his manner that he was a Fellow's dog, even if Dr. Charlett had not formally introduced him to me.

'Only a member of the senior common room can come in here,' said he, as he gave me his paw to hold with infinite condescension. 'No junior common room society for me, thank you.'

'But don't you find it a little dull at times?' said I.

He was an honest dog, and his tail replied, 'Yes, sometimes I do.'

To be the daily companion of a very serious person must be indeed wearing sometimes to a volatile collie. It is not at all his nature to sacrifice liveliness to position.

'I suppose he goes out for walks and has some fun that way?' I said to Dr. Charlett.

'I don't think that his master goes far

beyond the Parks,' said he ; 'he is not very strong.'

'Seldom beyond the Parks do we go,' said the collie, his eye rolling upon me rather sadly. Then he remembered that he was a Fellow's dog, and he came and sat upon the seat beside us and looked proudly down upon the common animals which ran and frisked on the path below us.

'What of cats?' said I. 'I have read of common room cats in the history of Tom of Corpus, but do Fellows ever have cats of their own?'

'Look!' said Dr. Charlett, 'you say that you could never have mistaken Plato for anything but a Fellow's dog; would you have known at a glance that Hodge was a Fellow's cat?'

I think that I should have known the status of the majestic puss who now advanced along the terrace. His tread

was so thoughtful, his air so philosophic. He looked a little sad, as was only natural and becoming in a cat whose master had gone down and left him, to put up with less cultured conversation than that which he usually enjoyed.

He came and sat beside me on the seat, and his sensitive high-bred nose twitched as he watched the sparrows. He made a plaintive little noise, and it is wonderful what an infinite amount of boredom a well-bred cat can contrive to express in a single mew.

I tried to comfort him on the lines of 'what a great girl you are'—a truly aggravating line with human beings—I trusted that it might prove more consoling to a cat.

'Think,' said I, as he allowed me to rub him under the chin,— 'Think what a beautiful cat you are, and what a fortunate one; think of your great position and

your unrivalled opportunities for acquiring knowledge! Why, your master might confide in you, in a single afternoon, as much philosophy as would serve to set up three professors. Who knows, O cat!' said I, 'that you may not live to be put into a book yourself? Why not you as well as that other Hodge?'

But the morning was too fine to be devoted to even the most darling of cats, and while I had a guide it behoved me to make the most of him.

'Where next?' said Dr. Charlett.

'Let Providence decide,' said I, and I was justified. As we came out of the gate of Merton we met a Fellow of Corpus. He was up for a day only between two sections of his holiday, he was just back from a reading-party in Norfolk, and was on his way to Switzerland. He took us into Corpus and showed us the library, where there

are the remains of the ancient ironwork arrangement for chaining the books. It is approached by a gallery which looks down into the chapel; this struck me as a very charming arrangement. A union of prayer and reading—the two best things in life. He took us into the Fellows' garden, which has a corner of the city wall between it and Christ Church.

Then we left him to his packing and we walked up Grove Street, which is a very perfect street, narrow and picturesque, and at the end of it the splendid spire of St. Mary's Church.

'Oh to be up there!' I was just thinking when Dr. Charlett said, 'How about St. Mary's—have you been there at all?—not at all—well, we will go there next, then.'

We went in, under the wonderful Renaissance porch with its twisted columns

and its statues of the Virgin and Child over the door. Inside the church has a very odd appearance. Almost all the nave is arranged for the University when it comes to hear University Sermons. The pulpit is in the middle of one side, and facing it is a seat for the Vice-Chancellor, and two seats below for the Proctors. On the right and left of the Vice-Chancellor sit the Doctors, on each side under the pulpit are seats for the Masters and Bachelors. There are large galleries for the undergraduates, and tucked away under these galleries there are pews for women, on the one hand for the 'Doctors' Ladies,' and on the other for the 'Masters' Ladies.' The general public finds a place in the corners that are left. Brownie shall bring me in the days to come to sit with her in dignified seclusion among the 'Masters' Ladies.'

Few churches have seen such dramatic scenes as this one. Dr. Charlett showed me where the piece of a pillar was cut away to make room for a platform on which Cranmer stood to receive his death sentence.

Here used to take place all the solemn Acts of the University. Here came Queen Elizabeth to listen to disputations in the Latin tongue and to reply in the same stately language.

Then we went into the Old Congregation House which stands on the north side of St. Mary's and looks from the outside as though it were an aisle of the church. There are many people who have been long in Oxford and often in St. Mary's who do not know of its existence. This for many centuries was the very heart of things, and, until Duke Humphrey built his library, all the books of the University were kept in an upper chamber of this

building. Now the lower room is rather melancholy; ranged round it are the statues which were taken down from the tower and replaced at the last restoration.

Here the Virgin, with archbishops and bishops and sundry saints, leans against the wall. Their work in this world is done and over. They have nothing more to do now but to stay here quietly until the Day of Judgment.

We went down again into the dark, narrow little court which separates this building from the church. Here Dr. Charlett bade me look up to where, directly above my head, was the 'mysterious statue,' the 'miraculous image,' which is the only one of all the statues still left in its original niche. No one knows for certain in whose honour this statue was set up.

Then we went up the tower, up and up,

over a bit of the roof, and up among the bells, and then out by the stony figures.

This, I felt, was my real farewell to Oxford, this looking down at the lovely city lying at my feet. We were standing high above, but also at the very heart of it.

East and west, north and south, beautiful every way, how much that I had seen, and how much that I may never see again. How I would love it all if fate ever brought me here and made it my home. Merton and Christ Church, All Souls and New College, they were only names to me three weeks ago, and now the very names of them make my heart beat faster with happy memories.

While we stood upon the tower we saw a great storm coming up behind the hills, and now the wind and the rain are playing with our hopes for an evening on the river.

In spite of the storm I have spent a very joyous afternoon. Kind Dr. Charlett has brought out all the treasures of his book-shelves and his portfolios and of his memory. I have been sitting in a lovely strew of books and pamphlets and pictures. I have gone a little farther into my researches about Nanny Brigantine. I hope that you haven't forgotten about Nanny and her name on the window at University?

Well, in the three-and-thirtieth volume of the books printed by the Oxford Historical Society, there is part of the journal of a certain Erasmus Phillips—a gay young gentleman of Pembroke College. 'On the seventh of May, in seventeen hundred and twenty-two, he gave a dance for Miss Brigantine (or Brickenden) at Mr. Conyers.' Now, don't you call that excessively interesting? Then again, there is a poem about her in *The Oxford Sausage*, a

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collection of 'Select Poetical Pieces' written by the Most Celebrated Wits of the University of Oxford.

Here we have a ballad 'Occasioned by a late Copy of Verses on Miss Bricken-den's going to Newnham by Water.'

'The lofty Trees of Newnham's pendent wood,
To meet her seem to rush into the flood ;'

writes her ardent adorer. Now we know that Pen Stonehouse, 'the Loveliest of Women' of the rhyme on the window, was Lady Patroness of the High Borlace in 1732, and it is puzzling that her name and Nanny Brigantine's should appear together on the window as though they were rival beauties. Perhaps that nameless undergraduate meant to suggest that Nanny's day was hopelessly gone over when he scrawled her name under that of Pen!

Now all this, dearest, is what is called 'research.'

I should dearly love to research amongst the forgotten Oxford belles of the eighteenth century ; I should like, as my young friend from Pembroke said, 'to swot at' this subject ; he didn't see the use, he said, of 'swotting' too much. The expression took my fancy, but I won't inflict it unduly upon you.

I shan't rest until I know a little more about Pen and Nanny ; where they lived and what they wore when they went to Nuneham or walked in Paradise Garden. Thus I should live two lives—the life of the present, with all that it can give me of joyful or sorrowful—and that other life, to turn to and be interested in, and to find out more about, if this one got at all troublesome.

Caricatures of all kinds, both old and new, did this kind old gentleman show to me ; they in themselves would make a history of Oxford as it lived and moved

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Coloured prints by Dighton of the dons and the dandies, the doctors and the citizens of Oxford in the early days of the nineteenth century can still be bought: I will bring some of them for you to see, and some of the more modern sort too; these are to be seen to-day in a window in Broad Street, where all the new ones appear, hot from the pencils of their producers.

There was another delightful book called *Walks in Oxford*, written in 1825 by one Wade. How I wish that these past weeks could come over again for me; I should see Oxford with more open eyes and a more instructed mind. Isn't this a wonderful prayer of the great Oxford antiquary, Thomas Hearne, which was found among his papers in the Bodleian?

‘O most gracious and merciful Lord

God, Wonderful in thy Providence, I return all possible thanks to thee for the care thou hast always taken of me. I continually meet with most signal instances of this thy Providence, and one act yesterday when I unexpectedly met with three old MSS., for which, in a particular manner, I return my thanks, beseeching thee to continue the same protection to me, a poor helpless sinner, and that for Jesus Christ his sake.'

'That,' said Dr. Charlett, 'is the spirit in which you must work, Miss Barbara, if you wish to follow even ever so humbly in the footsteps of Anthony Wood and of Thomas Hearne. We saw the grave of the former in Merton Chapel to-day, and to-morrow we are to go to St. Edmund Hall, where Hearne lived and died.

In the evening the storm died down as suddenly as it had come up. We went

for a drive out beyond Magdalen Bridge, up Headington Hill, and back by Ellsfield. It is a perfect village; it lies along the slope of the hill, and is embowered in trees. This was where Johnson and Warton came to visit Mr. Wise, and I pleased myself by thinking that I could identify the very spot on the hill where Johnson cried out, 'Sufflamina!' when Warton walked too fast.

Our Last Day.

How to make the most of our last day!

That was my last thought at night and my first thought in the morning.

To-morrow morning Mr. Bent insists that we shall go to breakfast in his rooms.

'It is an Oxford sensation,' he said, 'that you must not miss. I cannot allow you to go away without having been to a college breakfast.'

'Ridiculous nonsense,' said Mrs. Char-

lett ; 'why can't you let the girls eat their breakfast quietly at home? I suppose you want me and Dr. Charlett to turn out early in the morning too? I never heard of such a silly plan.'

But the dear, kind, autocratic old lady has yielded to her godson's persuasions, as she had always intended to do, and we are all to spend our last hours together round a college breakfast-table.

This afternoon Dr. Charlett has to go to the funeral of an old Fellow of Corpus. This evening there is a small dinner-party. This morning must be devoted by me to last long lingering looks at all the places which have grown so dear.

My kind Doctor took me to the Camera as he had said that he would. He showed me the three great volumes of the catalogue that are labelled 'Oxford.'

'Material for research here—eh! Miss Barbara?' he chuckled.

Here Dr. Charlett had to leave, having other business to pursue. I set off on what I supposed would be a lonely round, but outside the Bodleian I met Mr. Enderby. Oxford is wonderful in that way; one is always meeting the person who best tones in with the mood of the moment. He said that he would like to come and pay my farewells with me.

‘I dare say,’ said he, ‘that I shall see many things that I never saw before. One gets so soon into a groove here, going the same way and doing the same things always.’

I said that I would gladly give him the benefit of my three weeks’ stock of knowledge. So he came with me.

I told him how we had spent our first evening at Oxford in walking round her walls. He said that it had never occurred to him to do that, and didn’t I think that

it would be a good idea to end as I had begun?

So we set off and made the circuit, with one or two little variations. We went and said farewell to Celia's ghost in the Physick Garden. Here was a place to which Mr. Enderby went for the first time.

'Verily,' I said, 'I shall have to enlarge the scope of our scheme for showing the beauties of Oxford to the ladies who dwell in it. I shall have to form a branch of the Society for undergraduates, and possibly even for dons.'

This, I think, roused Mr. Enderby. He said that if I would come so far out of my circuit, he would take me to see something that he was sure I had not already seen. We set off on a tram to the end of the Cowley Road, and we went through a little white gate, and up a long field, and there, at the end of it, was a small grey chapel, deserted and

desecrated. There are a few stone buildings behind it which were once the houses in which lived the almsmen of St. Bartholomew. This was the St. Bartholomew's Hospital of which Mr. Grant had told us that he could not trust himself to speak. 'You had better,' he said, 'find some one else to show it to you, my language might be too strong.'

Mr. Enderby told me the tale of it. It was a long tale, and not a very plain one, and I couldn't listen as I should have done, because the ruins were so pitiful and so appealing. There was nothing grand about them; they only gave one the idea of a deserted nest, of a home which might have been so complete and cosy, so happy and so peaceful.

We went inside the little chapel, where a battered oak screen is still in its place.

The present buildings are of the seventeenth century only, but the foundation of



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL—THE CHAPEL

the hospital was in the reign of Henry the First.

‘If only one could bring it back to its ancient use once more,’ I sighed. ‘Surely it wouldn’t cost so dreadfully much.’

‘If it were yours,’ said Mr. Enderby, ‘you might put your house of rest here instead of at Boar’s Hill. Here is the chapel all ready for you, and the remains of the almshouses might serve as the beginning of your quadrangle. There was a grove here before the civil wars, and Anthony Wood tells us that it was “a great pleasure and ornament to the place, and afforded much recreation to the defatigated student by the continued chirping of the winged choir.”’ I think that I must certainly bring my ‘defatigated students’ here to rest. There was once a holy well here too, and processions used to come to it with flowers, and songs, and services.

‘Oh!’ said I, ‘I think that it makes me too sad; it is an abomination of desolation.’ It will be worse when I come again, for there was a building-board in the field, and soon, I suppose, there will be rows of new villas and all the tawdry accompaniments of suburban life. They cannot even let it die away in peace, or leave it as a quiet corner full of memories and regrets.

When we came to Magdalen Bridge Mr. Enderby said that he would borrow the boat of a Magdalen friend and take me back in it up the Cherwell. So my last bit of the river was like my first, only now it was I who lay back at my ease on the cushions, and there was no tumbling in for me this time.

We went out and watched the funeral, Mrs. Charlett, Brownie, and I. Mr. Bent and Dr. Charlett followed in the proces-

sion. There was a service in the chapel, and then the coffin was carried round the quadrangle ; a long line of Doctors and Masters walked behind it along Merton Street, and across the High Street to Holywell Cemetery. He had been a great man in the learned world, but he had outlived most of his friends and contemporaries, and had died in college all alone.

I told Brownie that she should point out to Mr. Bent what a much happier funeral his will be with a nice wife to bury him.

Afterwards Brownie and I went to say good-bye to Mrs. Codlicott. She too had been to the funeral, and had frankly enjoyed herself.

‘ Hashes to hashes, dust to dust, miss,’ she said, ‘ it’s a beautiful service ; I never loses a chance of hearing it if I can help

it, poor old gentleman,—well, to be sure, —we all comes to it in time, don't we, miss? it's a debt as we must all of us pay. My husband's aunt she used to do the Canon's washing, and she said he had a feeling 'eart. A beautiful funeral, wasn't it, miss? and a nice number of the gentlemen there considering that it's the Vacation. Very much respected the Canon was, and Mr. Enderby being out to dinner, and you being gone, I thought I might enjoy myself a bit—a very nice pair of gentlemen him and Mr. Bent too, and it's take them as you find them with the gentlemen, isn't it, miss?'

We asked her whether she would rather have men or women lodgers. 'There's more cooking with the gentlemen, and more bell-ringing with the ladies.' Such was Mrs. Codlicott's verdict on the merits of the sexes in this connection.

So now we have said our farewells to

Hope Cottage, to the two tiny lawns, to the rows of sunflowers and the evening primroses, to the apple-trees and the roses.

Zilpah and the poodle dog had gone out for a walk, so to them we could bid no good-bye. The Persian puss received us and parted from us with most profound indifference.

We had dinner in the garden. Dr. and Mrs. Charlett have been much in Italy, and they have acquired there a love of taking their meals in the open air, which is one of their most pleasing characteristics.

The artistic effect was charming as we sat at the long white table, with a background of flowers and of creeper-covered walls. The Oglanders came, and the Professor of Histology, and Mr. Enderby, and one or two stray people who had come up for the funeral or for other reasons.

‘And now,’ said Mrs. Oglander as we

took coffee under a spreading tree, 'tell me, how did he do it? and when? and where? Of course,' said she, 'we saw that it was coming when Mr. Bent stayed on in Oxford, and had his hair cut, and wore eyeglasses instead of spectacles, but we didn't think that he would have holed out quite so quickly. I have been playing golf all day,' said she, 'and the terms have become fixed on my tongue. Miss Brown must forgive me; I have seen so many Oxford engagements in my time, and it always interests me to know how they came about. There are several recognised openings. He begins, perhaps, by lending her books—and will she deign to write and tell him what she thinks of them? My husband courted me with the aid of an annotated *Republic*. I have known the *Nicomachean Ethics* to serve an equally useful end.'

'But wasn't that terribly confusing?

said I. 'You must have been uncommonly intelligent if you could return suitable replies.'

'Oh! not at all,' said she. 'Love is very blind, and my man thought me a very Phoenix of intelligence.'

'Do you talk about Plato all the day long now?'

'Oh no! That served its end, and faded away. Now my husband says that it rests him to hear me babble. So the philosopher is no longer insulted, and we are all content.'

'I wonder what science people do,' said I. 'Do they woo their ladies with their latest experiments? And do history men lay the last result of their researches at the feet of the beloved object?'

'I do not know,' said she. 'I never was wooed by either faculty. But we know from a poem in the *Oxford Magazine* how a meteorologist addresses his mistress.'

She asked me when they think of getting married.

‘At Christmas,’ said I. ‘It seems to be the time when Mr. Bent has most breathing space.’

‘That is excellent,’ quoth she. ‘She will begin her life here in Hilary Term. It is much more sensible than being married at Easter. Brides are so thick on the ground in the Summer Term, one has no time to compare them and their wedding gowns. Some one belonging to the college will probably ask her to stay with them next Term. When she comes there will be a large dinner-party, and we shall all be invited to meet her. Mr. Bent is a popular person, with many interests, and she will have heaps of friends.’

‘And will you all be very kind to her when she comes to live here?’ I asked.

‘Oh yes! very,’ the lady answered. ‘We shall all be perfect mothers to her.’

We shall tell her what butcher to go to, and where to buy the best bacon. We shall give her the addresses of our pet charwomen, and help to set her up in a general way. We are a very nice set of wives as wives go, here, Miss Burke, and Miss Brown has chosen her college well from that point of view,' said she.

'Are you all so interested in the brides?' said I.

'Naturally we are,' said she; 'but more especially, of course, in those who belong to our own college, or to our husband's "shop." A philosopher's bride is no unimportant part of his ethical system.'

'And has a bride anything to do,' I asked, 'except to frolic about and enjoy herself?'

'At first,' said she, 'she can do that; but later on it behoves her to choose her own line, whether she will be musical, artistic, philanthropic or domestic. Some

manage to combine all these rôles, but that is possible only for the exceptionally robust.'

'And your own line,' said I, 'what, pray, is that?'

'I can do nothing but talk,' said she. 'I really don't know what heading I come under. The last, I suppose. I told you before that my husband says he likes to hear me prattle. I can't help doing it, it is my nature to, so we are both pleased and happy. The world must go elsewhere if it finds my tongue a nuisance.'

'Some one told me,' said I, 'that you are a very learned lady. Isn't that true?'

'Not a bit,' said she. 'It's just a college legend, and those are things that no man believes, and no one can account for. The legend about me runs thus: "She was a student at Somerville. Mr. Oglander examined her. He fell in love

with her, though he saw nothing of her but her handwriting, because he said her mind was so Greek.”’

‘And it isn’t true at all?’ said I.

‘Not a word,’ said she. ‘I once had a second cousin at St. Hugh’s, that is the only visible foundation upon which it rests.’

Brownie had some talks with a few of her future friends. One was a dame of the old school, who told her pretty plainly that she was not at all reconciled to the innovation of married Fellows or to what she called ‘The Hall Girls.’ It used to be so pleasant, she told Brownie, ‘when the wives of professors and heads of houses and of the canons of Christ Church, and just a few of us, made up the circle of academic society.’

Brownie was quite crushed for a time. She felt that she owed the old lady some sort of apology for her proposed existence

here. She must try to be as unobtrusive and as retiring as possible.

She changed the conversation into what she thought would be a perfectly safe and unobnoxious channel, and asked the old lady whether she found the climate of Oxford at all trying.

‘Stuff and nonsense,’ was her answer, or words to that effect. ‘Oxford was always perfectly healthy when I was a girl, sixty years ago; if it didn’t agree with people they took ill and died, and the best thing they could do too. Such a fuss about nothing as there is in these days.’ Brownie said that the old lady finished with a derisive snort of dismissal.

One lady asked her if she didn’t find that being engaged was ‘an interesting phase’?

It was this one who told me afterwards that Brownie’s ‘mental attitude’ interested her deeply.

This kind of talk was fatiguing to a plain person, so Brownie came and joined Mrs. Oglander and Mr. Enderby and me under a spreading cedar. Mrs. Oglander gave her much advice and Mr. Enderby and I listened meekly.

I can remember some of it only. It was very aphoristic.

‘Do not give way to a fatal temptation of being too amiable. Many a promising young life has been wrecked because its owner did not know how to be disobliging at the right time. There is a time to be agreeable and a time to be disagreeable; if you cannot discern the signs of these times and behave accordingly, your health and spirits go all to pieces.’

Also she gave Brownie much useful advice as to her relations with her future husband’s ‘men.’ At least I feel sure that it was most excellent advice.

‘Don’t,’ she said, ‘try to be nice to

them or to be instructive or purposely amusing. I know a perfectly worthy, well-meaning woman who has parties on purpose for undergraduates and who gets her friends to come with the object of amusing them. I hear, too, the comments of the men on her praiseworthy efforts. Steer between the two extremes, my dear. Don't be frivolous on purpose, and don't imagine that they wish their acquaintance with you to take the place of a liberal education. Take them as they come; don't, for Heaven's sake, cater for them as for a class apart. I have even heard people described as the "kind who get on well with undergraduates." What nonsense!

'But you do get on well with them, don't you?' said we.

'I get on well with the world as a whole,' said she. 'Mainly, I expect, because I like it so much. Every one is so very nice

to me. People always are if only you like them enough. Have you any brothers?' and she turned to Brownie.

'No,' said Brownie. 'I never had any.'

'Ah,' said she, 'that's a pity, because you will not probably understand cricket or football talk. You will find that it is much more important to know what off-side and a penalty kick mean than to have all the Greek irregular verbs at your finger ends. You must be very intelligent and attentive to what is said by the better informed, and pick it up as fast as you can.'

'But you can't possibly like every one,' said I, harking back to the last subject but one, 'and don't you sometimes actively dislike them?'

'Very, very seldom indeed,' said she. 'I remember that there was one once whom no one could have failed to dislike, he was so pert, and he had such a horrid little

mind. He was positively rude to me. All the nice men detested him. One of them offered to rag his rooms if I wished it. "I will see that it's done, if you wish it, Mrs. Oglander," he said. I'm glad to say that he couldn't get through his Schools, and he faded away before long.'

'But ragging,' said we with one voice, 'when you say that the nice man offered to rag the horrid one's rooms, what exactly do you mean?'

'Oh, ragging,' said she, 'is not at all a right way of showing that a person is objectionable—far from it—I believe that you go into his rooms and you smash everything that can be smashed. Of course I don't quite know how it is done. I have only heard my husband speak of it as a reprehensible practice.'

She gave Brownie three simple rules by which to guide her life in Oxford as the wife of a highly respected don.

‘Know your proper place and keep in it. Honour the Vice-Chancellor. Revere the Head of your own college. Let the chief business of your life,’ said she, ‘be to see that your husband’s body gets it sop and holds its noise and leaves his soul free a little. Misquoting is one of the major vices, but Browning is so forcible, and he has said something that is just apposite to every occasion of daily life.’

She pointed out to Brownie the immense advantage that it will be to her to have seen something of Oxford and its ways before she comes to live here.

‘There is so little time left for seeing it,’ she said, ‘when once you are established here. The human interest looms so large and life is so full of variety. There is no time left for studying the buildings and their history. No doubt the really ideal thing is to marry a person who has taken

the History School and who has antiquarian tastes. Then you have a store of information always ready, and your husband can tell you interesting facts as you take your walks through Oxford and the surrounding country. Many of the dons are themselves absurdly ignorant and are easily put out of countenance by intelligent Americans with inquiring dispositions.

So now we know what it is to have eaten a college breakfast. It is a truly hospitable form of entertainment. A pleasant person, who sat next to me, said that when he was invited to one as a freshman he was amazed. 'It was my idea of a Christmas dinner,' said he. — 'I call it ridiculous waste.'—Such was the opinion of Mrs. Charlett, confided to us beforehand. Coffee-pot and teapot circulated round the table and the toast-racks followed after.

‘For a long time,’ said my friend, ‘I looked upon Oxford as a place where one could always get as much toast as one wanted. I came from a large family circle where the toast was always running short.’

This one explained too what a ‘commons’ is, and several other matters of interest and moment to one who is interested in all things Oxfordian. He told me what ‘battels’ are and what it is to be ‘sconced.’ There are so many things here that the most intelligent cannot understand all at once.

Mrs. Oglander says that it was years before she knew the difference between the ordinary gown of a Doctor and his Convocation habit. There is said to be only one person in Oxford who can say off-hand exactly all the occasions on which it is proper to wear the latter.

There was an old friend of Mr. Bent.

He was a former scholar of the college, the holder of a college living near to Oxford.

‘It is indeed wonderful,’ said he to Brownie, ‘that Bent should be willing to give up these beautiful rooms in order to marry.’

They say that it is his habit thus to say aloud what most of us think quietly to ourselves.

They were very beautiful rooms. The outer one, in which we breakfasted, was panelled, and there was a noble mantelpiece of carved oak. The inner room was lined with books from floor to ceiling. There was a grand confusion of books and letters and papers. It will be a labour of love for Brownie, the orderly, the neat, to tidy them all. They were furnished just rightly; not too severely for reasonable comfort, but with none of that taste for frippery which is so hateful in any man.



THE PANELLED ROOM

After breakfast Mr. Bent gratified my wish to see some undergraduates' rooms. We peeped into several sets. They did not look excessively attractive, but, of course, it is not fair to judge them in their shut-up state. There were queer and not very savoury little places called 'scouts' holes,' and some of the 'bedders,' as their inmates call them, were the oddest little apartments,—mere slits in many cases. One room was full of pictures and photographs, notably one of such a pretty girl which was signed 'Edith' in her own fair handwriting. I think that the young man should not have left his Edith's picture to languish thus all alone in a college, for inquiring females like ourselves to come and see.

I do hope that Brownie and Mr. Bent will get a house that is near to the heart of things, and not away in the cold and dreary north. We looked at all that we

passed on the way home, wondering what chance there might be that she will inhabit any of them.

They all came down to the station to see us off.

Mr. Bent brought flowers for Brownie and sweets for me. Mr. Enderby has lent me a copy of *The Republic*. He wishes me to write and tell him what I think of it. He talks of coming one day to the county Galway to look for his grandmother's people.

It was only when we were in the train that we remembered to go over all the things that we had said we would do and that we have left undone.

'Brownie, Brownie,' I said, 'how can you face your great-aunt with an unseen Dodo on your conscience? How can I show my guide-book to my Aunt Camilla

and confess that by me Alfred's Jewel still remains unvisited? It was to possess our souls that we came to Oxford, Brownie, not to lose our hearts.'

But Brownie made no answer, nor did I expect one.

We were looking our last at the dear place. At the dome and the towers and the background of low green hills. Then, all too quickly, the tower of Iffley Church came into sight among the trees on a little hill above the river.

Now we have really said good-bye to the city of curving streets and winding waters.

‘But now I may be justly blamed to pretend to give account of matters far above my Reach or capacity, but herein I have described what have come within my knowledge either by view or reading, or relation from others which according to my conception have faithfully Rehearsed, but where I have mistaken in any form or subject matter I easily submit to a correction and will enter such erratas in a supplement annex to ye Book of some particulars since remarkt; and shall conclude with a hearty wish and recommendation to all but especially my own Sex, the study of those things that tends to Improve the mind and makes our Lives pleasant and comfortable as well as profitable in all the Stations and Stages of our Lives, and render suffering and age supportable and Death less formidable and a future state more happy.’

CELIA FIENNES

POSTSCRIPT

OXFORD, *December* 1900

MR. JONES of Balliol writes to Mr. M'Dougall, of the same college, who is ill and away.

‘ You ask me to give you all the college news. There is not much to tell if one excepts Enderby’s fellowship, which you will have seen announced already.

‘ There is also the less expected news of his engagement to a Miss Burke. She is young, rich, beautiful and charming. What a combination ! Her father was an Irishman of good family but poor estate. He went to America and made his fortune; he married an Englishwoman, lost his wife, and shut himself up to study and to brood.

‘Miss Burke, therefore, has just that proportion of the Celt in her which makes for perfection ; she is just sufficiently antinomian to be a comfortable companion for our Enderby.

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Q., ‘Alma Mater’

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